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GRAMOPHONE SOUNDS OF AMERICA

RECORDINGS & EVENTS A special eight-page section for readers in the US and Canada

Adams · Mackey

'American Grace'

Adams China Gates. Hallelujah Junction^a
Mackey Sneaky March. Stumble to Grace^b
Orli Shaham, ^a Jon Kimura Parker pfs ^bLos Angeles
Philharmonic Orchestra / David Robertson
Canary Classics © CC11 (49' • DDD)

Canary Classics © CC11 (49' • DDD)

^bRecorded live at Walt Disney Hall, Los Angeles,
April 5-7, 2013



Canary Classics has arrayed a formidable team for the worldpremiere recording of

Steven Mackey's piano concerto Stumble to Grace, inspired by the journey Mackey and dedicatee Orli Shaham's respective young children took in their first years of becoming human. Played by Shaham with a virtuoso's colour and a mother's grace, and partnered by the LA Philharmonic at its technicolour best, the concerto's five 'Stages' wield a rich vocabulary of cultural influences, including Monk, Mozart and Vince Guaraldi. Played continuously without pause, the 26-minute Stumble begins with a celesta lullaby and ends in the throes of an exhilarating triple fugue which includes in its midst what Mackey describes as 'the various stages of progress and regress in the physical and spiritual evolution of the piano'. And yet, for all the size and complexity of Mackey's impressive musical engine, the lasting impression is of authentic affection and love.

Shaham has innocent fun with Mackey's *Sneaky March*, brings an ethereal beauty to John Adams's *China Gates*, and, with Jon Kimura Parker, intrepidly investigates the intersections of angularity and romanticism in Adams's *Hallelujah Junction*. The bookletnotes include an illuminating personal introduction by Shaham and an absorbing essay by Frank J Oteri, which details all the intellectual threads of the music without once losing delight in the music itself.

Recorded during performances in May 2013, *Stumble to Grace* takes full advantage of Walt Disney Concert Hall's focused, brilliant acoustics. The excellent piano solo recordings were made in Mechanics Hall, Worcester, Massachusetts. Laurence Vittes

GRAMOPHONE talks to ...

Orli Shaham

The Israeli-born American pianist on Mackey's Stumble to Grace

This is the first piano concerto you've ever commissioned...

I met Steven Mackey in 2007 at the Aspen Music Festival. He was playing his own electric guitar concerto, *Tuck and Roll*, and the way he breathed such life into his own music made me convinced that he should write a concerto for me.

Explain the theme of Stumble to Grace...

When we met, I was seven months pregnant with twins, and Steve's son was born less than a year after my sons - that's where the idea of the 'Stages' of a child's development comes from. But the theme is entirely Steve's. I don't direct composers - I just want to tell them I love their music and leave it to them!

Describe the first 'Stage' of the concerto...

One of Steve's greatest talents is his creativity in using an orchestra. The first sound you hear is an out-of-tune harmonic on the



contrabass, which is then matched by the other strings. So when the piano comes in, it's the *piano* that sounds out of tune. That sets up that toy piano sound, the idea of a confused, newborn baby. It feels like the piano is making its first hesitant attempts at communicating.

In the final 'Stage', a fugue emerges...

Playing a fugue is like following my twins around, except this fugue is even harder – there are three tunes so it's like having triplets! I love that Steve took a traditional form and turned it into something new, even though it took me the longest time to learn. At this point in the piece, the child is able to run and walk – but this doesn't come without a struggle.

Druckman

That Quickening Pulse. Nor Spell Nor Charm.
Lamia^a Cavalli Delizie contente che l'alme beate
(arr Druckman) M-A Charpentier Suite from
Médée (arr Druckman)

^aLucy Shelton sop

Boston Modern Orchestra Project / Gil Rose BMOP/sound (© 1029 (56' • DDD)



In recordings made between 2006 and 2010, conductor Gil Rose and the changing

personnel of his amazing BMOP band provide a compelling cross-section of the masterful music of Jacob Druckman which in part also celebrates the American mezzo-

soprano Jan DeGaetani. From the orchestral fireworks of That Quickening Pulse to the declamatory passion of Lamia, a song-cycle about witch power on French, German, Latin and Malay texts, the music's high purpose and coherent flow explain why Druckman once played a central role in American musical life (the pieces on this CD were commissioned by the St Louis Symphony, New York Philharmonic and the St Paul and Los Angeles Chamber orchestras). One look at Jacob Druckman's meticulously notated scores and you know this was a composer who knew what he wanted but that the music would never play by itself; Lamia, for example, originally required a full orchestra and two conductors (the reduced version for chamber orchestra recorded here does fine with one).

gramophone.co.uk GRAMOPHONE APRIL 2014 I

NEW RELEASES





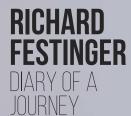
RICHARD **DANIELPOUR**

TOWARD A SEASON OF PEACE

Danielpour's orchestral writing has a smooth grandeur that is very easy to listen to and readily draws a listener into the texts.

- LA Times

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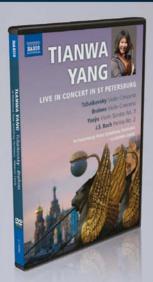




There is a Shaker expression, 'every force evolves a form, that comes vividly to mind when listening to the music of Richard Festinger.

- Benjamin Frandzel

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Explosions of power: Paul W Popiel and his highly expressive University of Kansas Wind Ensemble play Glass's percussive concerto and Fairouz's dramatic symphony

Despite the impressive dimensions and ambitions of Lamia and Lucy Shelton's inspired, intrepid singing, pride of place goes to one of Druckman's most heartfelt landscapes, Nor Spell Nor Charm, 'an extension and elaboration' of an earlier song to Shakespeare's 'You spotted snakes' snippet, written for DeGaetani while she was suffering from leukaemia. Throughout, it's the casual virtuosity of Druckman's writing which carries the day, even in the well-meaning, old-fashioned adaptations of music by 17th-century composers Francesco Cavalli and Marc-Antoine Charpentier. Good sound throughout, and detailed booklet-notes by Daniel Albertson.

Laurence Vittes

Fairouz · Glass

Fairouz Symphony No 4, 'In the Shadow of No Towers'a Glass Concerto Fantasy for Two Timpanists and Orchestra (transcr Lortz)^b a Jānis Porietis tpt b Ji Hye Jung, a Gwendolyn Burgett timp University of Kansas Wind Ensemble / Paul W Popiel

Naxos Wind Band Classics (\$\sigma\$ 8 573205 (58' • DDD)



From Naxos's Wind Band Classics series come two explosions of wind-ensemble power.

Positively hallucinogenic at times, the multidimensional writing in both hints at what future 3D sound pleasures might be like. In Mohammed Fairouz's new dramatic symphony, about experiences at ground level during 9/11 inspired by selected panels from Art Spiegelman's controversial comic book In the Shadow of No Towers, it's about harnessing the expressive power and colour of a major university-level ensemble. Fairouz's tone is softer than Spiegelman's but is still often gaunt and terrifying. In trying to catch the full New York panoply of life, Fairouz uses colour liberally, tinged occasionally with Middle Eastern harmonies; he seems to be at his most authentic, however, in meditative moments such as the drawn-out fog in 'Notes of a Heartbroken Narcissist', the symphony's second movement.

Philip Glass's tour de force from 2000 explores the depths of percussive impact and texture, conjuring up extraordinary musical fantasies out of simple pulses and their divergence. The third movement is a dream for percussionists, consisting of a spectacular five-minute cadenza that segues addictively into the final movement.

The eloquent, disciplined performances come across with stunning dynamic range and almost dimensional transparency. Paul R Laird's booklet-note enhances the listening experience, although I would wait until I had heard the music a few times before venturing to match up what he describes with what you are hearing.

Laurence Vittes

McTee

Symphony No 1, 'Ballet for Orchestra'. Circuits. Double Play. Einstein's Dream **Detroit Symphony Orchestra / Leonard Slatkin** Naxos American Classics ® 8 559765 (67' • DDD) Recorded live at the Max M Fisher Music Center, Detroit, 2010 & 2012



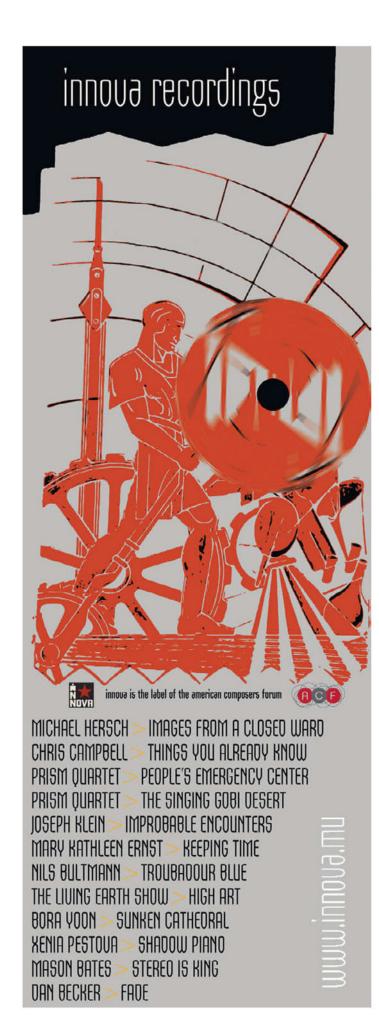
When asked if she enjoys writing for orchestra, Cindy McTee (b1953) likely

would be unable to put on a poker face. At least, that's the impression one gets after listening to the vivacious and fertile works on this disc. Each shows a different aspect of McTee's orchestral love, whether she's conjuring whirlwind colours, arresting jazz riffs or kaleidoscopic computer sounds.

The repertoire spans two decades, starting with *Circuits* (1990), which jumps from place to place with almost non-stop, acrobatic energy. It's propulsive and percussive, full of irresistible textures and details, a burst of orchestral whimsy that's gone in little more than five minutes.

On a more expansive scale is McTee's captivating Symphony No 1, *Ballet for Orchestra* (2002), whose four movements embrace various dance styles and draw inspiration from famous scores of balletic pedigree or otherwise. The composer explores another world entirely in *Einstein's*

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since the 18th century." Stereo Review. CD723: Rendezvous & Dreams by Kosins; Muradian, Concerto (Oboe & Strings); Biggs, Dance Suite; La Traille, Quintet (Oboe & Strings). "colorful new works" Gramophone



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Whirlwind colours: Leonard Slatkin and his Detroit Symphony Orchestra savour the propulsive music of Cindy McTee

Dream (2004), a homage in seven sections of eerie and fantastical invention. Scored for string orchestra, percussion and computer music, the score mixes electronic crunches and swirls with dizzying string figures and a Bach chorale that heightens the aura.

In *Double Play* (2010), Ives is the inspiration in the opening movement, 'Unquestioned Answer', and ticking clocks pervade the second, 'Tempus fugit'. It's a cascade of diverting activity – sometimes calm, often clamorous – that Slatkin and the Detroit musicians fill to the sonic brim.

Donald Rosenberg

O'Riordan

'Strange Flowers'

Sonata rapsodica^a. Water Lilies^b. Pressing Forward, Pushing Back^c. Dying Light^d. A Strange Flower for Birds and Butterflies^e. Lacrimosa^b ^cReuben Councill fl^{ae}Marianne Gythfeldt cl ^{de}Lawrence Stomberg vc ^{abcde}Holly Roadfeldt pf Ravello ® RR7883 (73' • DDD)



The six works on 'Strange Flowers' reveal a composer for whom imagery is a defining

inspiration. Each of the pieces – beautifully played – has a title that establishes a mood or a particular emotional world. The sounds within the narratives capture the ear through tranquil or vibrant animation.

Kirk O'Riordan (*b*1968) focuses on nature in several works, evincing an Impressionistic affinity for atmosphere and instrumental colour. The disc derives its name from

A Strange Flower for Birds and Butterflies, a piece based on a haiku by Matuso Basho that places clarinet, cello and piano most notably in delicate and hypnotic interactions. Two works for solo piano, Water Lilies and Lacrimosa, show O'Riordan's penchant for sustained lines and harmonies saturated in shimmering tonal hues.

Although much of the music presented here rarely raises its voice above a hush, O'Riordan also engages in gentle bursts of frisky activity, as in the second movement of Sonata rapsodica for clarinet and piano. The buoyancy doesn't last long, as the music returns to the hauting utterances of the opening movement. Similarly, the disc's two other works favour poetry over drama. The propulsion that often keeps flute and piano in motion in Pressing Forward, Pushing Back is interrupted by expanses of songful repose. Dylan Thomas's 'Do not go gentle into that good night' was the motivation for Dying Light, which has moments of vehemence for cello and piano amid passages of melancholic or prayerful beauty. O'Riordan is a deeply sensitive composer who savours going gently into the night. Donald Rosenberg

'Italia'

'Bellissimo Seicento!'

Bertoli Sonata I Castello Sonatas: Libro primo -VII; VIII; Libro secondo - VII; VIII (two recordings) Fontana Sonatas - VI; IX; XII. Sonata a due Frescobaldi II primo libro - Toccata IV Marini Sonata XI Rore/Pasquini Ancor che col partire Piccinini Corrente. Toccata Michael McCraw bn Manfredo Kraemer vn Dolores Costoyas gtrs Elisabeth Wright kybds early-music.com (E) EMCCD7774 (74' • DDD)



What a wealth of wondrous old music keeps pouring from sources hither and

yon, much of it from Italy in the early 17th century. Here a famous composer, Girolamo Frescobaldi, shares the bill with lesser-known experts.

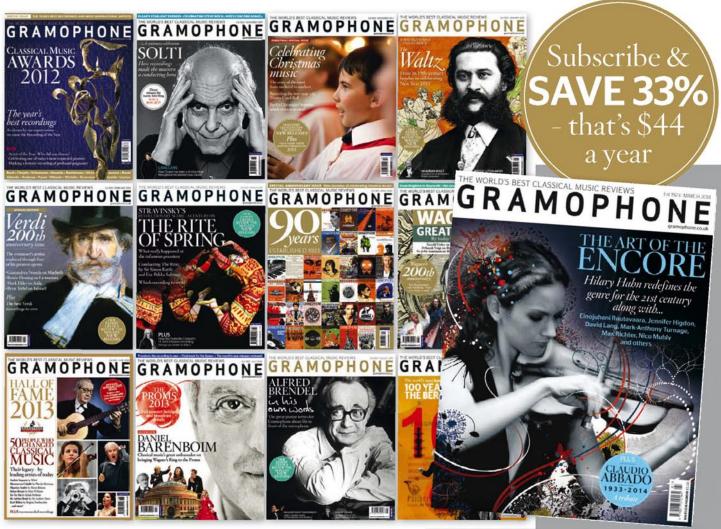
Many of the works feature the dulcian, the Renaissance precursor to the bassoon. With a timbre of woody resonance, it functions charismatically as soloist and becomes a splendid harmonic partner in continuo passages. The dulcian is often teamed in exuberant or lyrical dialogues with the violin – one delectable example being Castello's *Sonata ottava* (from Libro II), which is so irresistible (and so winningly dashed off by bassoonist Michael McCraw and violinist Manfredo Kraemer) that the recording includes both studio and live versions.

What comes before is equally pleasurable. Castello opens the programme in sprightly and affecting fashion, and then allows his colleagues to have their say. Two Piccinini pieces for solo theorbo enable Dolores Costoyas to display artistry of utmost refinement and flexibility. Harpsichordist Elisabeth Wright, who elsewhere plays the organ, glistens in the luxuriant writing of Rore's 'Anchor che col partire', a madrigal arranged for keyboard by Ercole Pasquini.

Violinist Kraemer and McCraw work up many storms along the way, relishing the treasures at their fingers, bow and reed.

Donald Rosenberg

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THE SCENE

The New York Philharmonic launches its Biennial, Jeremy Denk oversees the Ojai Festival, Joshua Bell plays Sibelius in Indianapolis, and St Louis Opera Theatre premieres 'Twenty-Seven'

MONTREAL, QC / NEW YORK, NY

Trinity Wall Street

The 40 Voice Project (May 22 & 25)

New York City's Choir of Trinity Wall Street teams up with the renowned early-music vocal ensemble, Studio de musique ancienne de Montréal, for two concerts on May 22 (in Montreal) and May 25 (at Trinity Church in NYC). The two ensembles – performing as The 40 Voice Project – present a showcase of vocal polyphony: Thomas Tallis's *Spem in alium*, Antoine Brumel's *Missa Et ecce terrae motus* (The Earthquake Mass), and Purcell's *Hear my prayer*, *O Lord*.

trinitywallstreet.org/events/40-voices-project

INDIANAPOLIS, IN

Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra

Joshua Bell; Dvořák's New World Symphony (June 5-7)

Violinist Joshua Bell brings his superlative talent back to Indianapolis to perform the Sibelius Violin Concerto. With their dynamic music director Krzysztof Urbański leading, the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra also perform Dvořák's Symphony No 9, From the New World. Opening the evening programme is the string sextet from Strauss's last opera, Capriccio, a one-of-a-kind chamber-music overture for strings.

indianapolissymphony.org

TORONTO, ON

Toronto Symphony Orchestra

Songs for Soprano (June 5 & 7)

Music director Peter Oundjian leads the Toronto Symphony in two concerts that promise to be lush, nostalgic and atmospheric. The programme opens with Mozart's Overture to *Don Giovanni*, then moves on to Richard Strauss's profound and elegiac *Four Last Songs*, here performed by the American soprano Sondra Radvanovsky (for whom Toronto is now home). Ravel's gorgeous *Daphnis et Chloé* Suites No 1 & 2 bring the evening to a joyful conclusion.

tso.ca

OJAI, CA Ojai Music Festival

Jeremy Denk & guest artists (June 12-15)

As the artistic director of the 68th Ojai Music



Festival, Jeremy Denk says his intention is to throw a musical party, with a little help from some brilliant musical quests. Denk - not only a superb pianist but also a musical intellect is the master of musical juxtaposition, evident in the works being presented here. Thus Janáček's *On An Overgrown Path* is interwoven with short works by Schubert, and the jazz pianist Uri Caine improvises on Mahler. Other guest artists include chamber orchestra The Knights, American composer Timo Andres, and violinist Jennifer Frautschi. The world premiere of a new opera, The Classical Style, described by Denk as 'a satire of classical pomp', with a libretto by Denk and music by Steven Stucky - is a highlight. (For more information, see page 50 of our Festivals Guide.) ojaifestival.org

ojanestivai.org

ST LOUIS, MO Opera Theatre of St Louis

World premiere of Twenty-Seven by Ricky Ian Gordon (June 14-29)

Michael Christie conducts the world premiere of *Twenty-Seven*, an opera by Ricky lan Gordon commissioned by Opera Theatre of St Louis. Set in Paris in the 1920s, *Twenty-Seven* explores the story of Gertrude Stein's life between World War I and World War II at

NEW YORK, NY

New York Philharmonic

NY Phil Biennial (May 28 - June 7)

Music director Alan Gilbert has guided the New York Philharmonic into ever more adventurous musical realms. Now the orchestra launches its inaugural NY Phil Biennial, billed as 'a kaleidoscopic exploration of today's music by more than 50 modern composers from 12 countries'. Inspired by visual-art biennial events, this is a significant departure for the Philharmonic, which teams up with partners beyond Avery Fisher Hall, including the Orchestra of St Luke's, Bang on a Can, the Juilliard School, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. One highlight indicative of Gilbert's new direction sees the orchestra collaborating with the Bang on a Can All-Stars in a concert that features founding member Julia Wolfe's Anthracite Fields.

nyphil.org

her famous home, 27 Rue de Fleurus. The role of Stein is sung by renowned mezzo-soprano Stephanie Blythe, who makes her Opera Theatre of St Louis debut in this role written specifically for her. The opera is directed by James Robinson; the libretto is by Royce Vavrek.

opera-stl.org

BETHESDA, MD Strathmore Music Festival

Denis Matsuev (June 17)

The Russian pianist Denis Matsuev has proved himself capable of feats of heroic virtuosity on the keyboard – in the tradition of Vladimir Horowitz and Evgeny Kissin, perhaps – but also of hushed introspection as a counterpoint to such showmanship. Since he won the 1998 International Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow, Matsuev has established his credentials as a must-see, multi-encore pianist. His programme begins with Haydn and Schumann, but then turns to Rachmaninov, concluding with the composer's demanding Piano Sonata No 2. Matsuev performs a similar programme at Carnegie Hall on Sunday June 15.

strathmore.org

Previews by Damian Fowler

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GRAMOPHONE Founded in 1923 by Sir Compton Mackenzie and Christopher Stone as 'an organ of candid opinion for the numerous possessors of gramophones'

The changing nature of how we buy music

s I write, deliverymen are carrying huge numbers of boxes of CDs into our new office. After a few months' delay while the archive was built, *Gramophone*'s library – all 130,000 discs of it – has followed us to our converted Victorian church. And we've missed it. 'Comparison recordings' are a vital part of a Gramophone review - let alone a Collection or Specialist's Guide - so to have so many discs, many unavailable elsewhere, readily to hand is essential to our work. I'm guessing that most readers here don't need convincing of the importance of our CD library. But seeing crate after crate of discs being unpacked does seem a good moment to reflect on the changing nature of how music is bought.

In February, the British record industry body, the BPI, revealed that digital sales - that is, downloading and streaming - now account for half of the record industry's income. Streaming alone increased by 41 per cent in the past year, accounting for 10 per cent of total revenue. This, of course, is for music in general, and for many reasons - demographics, the greater tendency for classical listeners to be collectors, the misconception that downloading offers inferior sound quality to CD (in reality it can actually be superior) – the story for classical is somewhat different.

The BPI doesn't offer specifically classical data but one leading independent label I spoke to revealed that 20 per cent of turnover is now from digital downloads, a figure that's remained static for several years. And while it may not sound like good news, the BPI reported that physical sales of music declined by 6.4 per cent last year – a smaller decline than was expected.



And then there is streaming. Some labels see services such as Spotify as a major threat: an understandable stance. After all, someone can listen to a recording an indefinite number of times and, by either occasionally encountering an advert or paying for a subscription, not have to buy it (and the labels receive a much smaller revenue than if they had).

However, the other side is whether those listeners would have bought it anyway. Streaming is a great way of introducing new artists and repertoire to new audiences. Futhermore, because services like Spotify cover every conceivable kind of music, there's also a strong chance of people just trying out classical and liking what they hear. Streaming income, while small, is also no longer negligible. The question is whether this income is in addition to or at the expense of CD/ download sales - largely impossible to answer.

As one insider put it to me, streaming is here and needs to be addressed. How much labels receive - and listeners pay – for streaming is a source of ongoing debate, and rightly so. Listeners should value music, and artists and labels should be paid for recording it. But it's worth remembering that while for many years newspapers were free online, many are now successfully behind paywalls. Something may feel like the norm now, but nothing's set in stone.

Similarly, from the low-resolution MP3s of a few years ago, many labels now offer studio-master quality downloads. This is currently a small market but my hunch is that – as a genre in which sound quality is integral - classical music may lead the way here.

martin.cullingford@markallengroup.com

THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS



'I first heard Haydn's Harmoniemesse on the radio when I was eight or nine,' says the

author of this month's Collection, **GERAINT LEWIS.** 'It was also performed by Sir John Eliot Gardiner at the first BBC Proms concert I attended in 1972. What life-enhancing music! I'd happily listen to it every day of my life.'



PHILIP KENNICOTT, who has provided this month's cover story, says: 'In the early 1990s I remember being

angry at Pavarotti, whose voice sounded exactly like I remembered it from recordings but whose stage presence seemed so lacklustre. The chance to revisit Pavarotti's first decade of recordings 20 years later has been a wonderful rediscovery.'



'It's a joy to give myself time with new music that's about music,' says **PETER** QUANTRILL, author of this

month's profile of Julian Anderson. 'This composer is always happier talking about other art than his own but he was generous with his time even while burning the midnight oil finishing his new opera. Time to dig out my Sophocles!'

THE REVIEWERS Andrew Achenbach • Nalen Anthoni • Mike Ashman • Philip Clark • Alexandra Coghlan • Rob Cowan (consultant reviewer) • Jeremy Dibble • Peter Dickinson • Jed Distler • Duncan Druce • Adrian Edwards Richard Fairman • David Fallows • David Fanning • Iain Fenlon • Fabrice Fitch • Jonathan Freeman-Attwood Caroline Gill • Edward Greenfield • David Gutman • Lindsay Kemp • Philip Kennicott • Tess Knighton • Richard Lawrence • Ivan March • Ivan Moody • Bryce Morrison • Jeremy Nicholas • Christopher Nickol • Geoffrey Norris Richard Osborne • Stephen Plaistow • Peter Quantrill • Guy Rickards • Malcolm Riley • Marc Rochester • Julie Anne Sadie • Edward Seckerson • Pwyll ap Siôn • Harriet Smith • Ken Smith • David Patrick Stearns • David Threasher David Vickers • John Warrack • Richard Whitehouse • Arnold Whittall • Richard Wigmore • William Yeoman

Gramophone, which has been serving the classical music world since 1923, is first and foremost a monthly review magazine, delivered today in both print and digital formats. It boasts an eminent and knowledgeable panel of experts. which reviews the full range of classical music recordings. Its reviews are completely independent. In addition to reviews, its interviews and features help readers to explore in greater depth the recordings that the magazine covers, as well as offer insight into the work of composers and performers. It is the magazine for the classical record collector, as well as for the enthusiast starting a voyage of discovery.

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ORCHESTRAL

First recording for Bax's Symphony in F; early survey of new recordings featuring anniversary composer CPE Bach; two Sibelius concertos

CHAMBER

Florilegium turn from German music to French; two new discs of chamber works by Korngold; Stanford's complete works for violin and piano

INSTRUMENTAL

Fourth disc in Kei Koito's Bach organ series; Fifth disc in Christian Leotta's Beethoven sonata cycle; Buchbinder moves from Beethoven to Schubert

VOCAL

Adams's 'Other Mary' oratorio live from LA; Schubert song from Boesch and Finley; The Cardinall's Musick sing Tallis on Hyperion

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OPERA

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REPLAY

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Jeremy Nicholas reads the first volume in a major new biographical survery of Jascha Heifetz; David Fanning on a new study of Mussorgsky and friends

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Historian Amanda Vickery on admiring British pastoral music and Handel's philanthropy

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DECCA







DEBUSSY: Préludes - Books I & II; Fantasie. MESSIAEN: Piano works Kars's landmark recording of Debussy's Préludes, the Fantasie with Alexander Gibson, and two of the Vingt Régards of Messiaen, returns to the catalogue. Jean-Rodolphe Kars



MESSIAEN: Organ works
Recorded in 1966 but never commercially
issued, these recordings of Le Banquet
Céleste, Les Corps Glorieux, Apparition de
l'église éternelle, Verset pour la fête de la
dédicace and extracts from L'Ascension
receive their first ever release.

Gillian Weir



SCHUBERT: Wanderer-Fantasie;
2 Klavierstücke
Much praised in its day, the Decca
LP was short-lived in the catalogue,
and is now released on CD for the

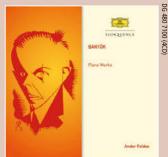
first time.
Jean-Rodolphe Kars



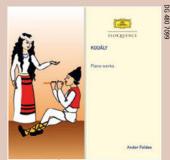
MOZART: Ballet Music
Les Petit Reins, A Musical Joke and the
first release on CD of the ballet music
for Idomeneo.

Willi Boskovsky

DG 480 7096 (2CD



BARTÓK: Piano works
Foldes's 4-LP set of Bartók's solo piano
works for Deutsche Grammophon,
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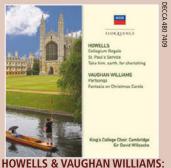
KODÁLY: Piano works
Foldes's American Decca LP of piano
music by Kodály, complete on
CD for the first time.
Andor Foldes



Tone Poems
Van Kempen's searing, edge-of-theseat Tchaikovsky recordings with the
Concertgebouw from 1951.
Paul van Kempen

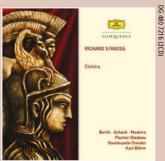
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THE ART OF SANDOR KONYA
The three studio recital recordings of
Hungarian tenor Sándor Kónya,
for Deutsche Grammophon and MCA,
complete on CD for the first time.
Sandor Konya



Choral Music
On CD for the first time – Willcocks's
Howells 1966 Argo LP – plus the
Vaughan Williams 45rpm disc

of choral music (1959).
King's College Choir / David Willcocks



R. STRAUSS: Elektra
The first complete studio recording
of Elektra, under Karl Böhm's
thrilling direction, with Inge Borkh
in the title role.
Karl Böhm



TCHAIKOVSKY: String Quartets
Nos. 1-3; Souvenir de Florence
The Gabrieli String Quartet's criticallyacclaimed recording of the three
String Quartets of Tchaikovsky, plus
Marriner's energetic account
of Souvenir de Florence.
Gabrieli String Quartet; Academy of

St. Martin in the Fields

COCQUENCE

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Plan Scopy & Lustations

RITA STREICH
WALTZES & ARIAS · FOLK SONGS
AND LULLABIES
Rare 1950s and 1960s recordings
by coloratura soprano Rita Streich.
Rita Streich

GRAMOPHONE Editor's choice



Martin **Cullingford** introduces the finest recordings from this month's reviews





TCHAIKOVSKY

Piano Concertos Nos 1 and 2 **Denis Matsuev** pf Mariinsky Orchestra / Valery Gergiev Mariinsky 🖲 🥮 **MARO548 ▶ JEREMY NICHOLAS'S REVIEW IS ON** PAGE 52

Matsuev's Tchaikovsky No 1 is thrilling, the work's drama excitingly to the fore - a new 'personal benchmark', says Jeremy Nicholas. That's for you to decide, of course, but do hear it.



CPE BACH Magnificat Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin / Hans-Christoph Rademann Harmonia Mundi 🖲

The second superb CPE Bach disc to make my Choice in his anniversary year. Rademann drives forwards both choral and orchestral music with clarity and energy.

HMC90 2167

▶ REVIEW ON PAGE 59



Symphony No 10, etc Gidon Kremer et al;

WEINBERG

Kremerata Baltica ECM New Series M 2 481 0669

Exploratory, experimental and urgently communicative, all attributes David Fanning notes of Kremer's Weinberg, and ones I strongly second.

► REVIEW ON PAGE 68



'JACOBEAN LUTE MUSIC' Jakob Lindberg lute The intimate colours of the lute

are beautifully caught in this recital of early-17th-century English and Scottish works - a 'terrific release', says William Yeoman.



DVD

'REFUGE IN MUSIC'

A film by Dorothee Binding and Benedict Mirow DG 🖲 🐸 073 5077GH

An important and deeply moving record of both the horror of Theresienstadt and the humanity that somehow managed to survive, in large part through music.

REVIEW ON PAGE 109



BRUCKNER Symphony No 9 **London Symphony** Orchestra / **Bernard Haitink** LSO Live B . LSO0746

'Great music-making,' concludes David Gutman, and so it is: a deeply considered, powerful presentation of (the three movements of) Bruckner's final thoughts.

► REVIEW ON PAGE 60



1930s VIOLIN **CONCERTOS, Vol 1'** Gil Shaham vn Canary Classics (M) (2)

CC12 A generous offering

of music, and performances generous in spirit too, whether in the lyricism of Samuel Barber or the mysteriousness of Karl Amadeus Hartmann.

► REVIEW ON PAGE 69



SCHUBERT Winterreise Gerald Finley bar Julius Drake pf Hyperion © CDA68034 Gerald Finley's ability

to completely inhabit the complexity of a character is just as true here as in opera: an intense and ultimately moving Winterreise.

▶ REVIEW ON PAGE 103



AR THOMAS

Orchestral Works Nimbus ® NI6258 This survey should help draw deserved attention to the

American composer Augusta Read Thomas, two of whose champions – Boulez and Knussen - here give her music compelling advocacy.

▶ REVIEW ON PAGE 67



LANGGAARD

String Quartets, Vol 2 Nightingale Quartet Dacapo 🖲 🥞 6 220576 'To call the second volume "eagerly

anticipated" would be a massive understatement,' said our critic of Vol 1 (6/12). Well, here it is, both drama and delicacy every bit as beautifully explored.

► REVIEW ON PAGE 81



SHEPPARD

Sacred Choral Music Choir of St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh / **Duncan Ferguson** Delphian © DCD34123

The exquisite singing here is remarkably direct and beautifully shaped: a striking disc which makes a strong case for the music of John Sheppard.

▶ REVIEW ON PAGE 105



REISSUE

TAVENER The Veil of the Temple ECO / Stephen Layton Signum SIGCD367 The work Tavener

considered his supreme achievement, reissued as a fitting tribute.

▶ REVIEW ON PAGE 106



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FOR THE RECORD



Robert Quinney will replace Edward Higginbottom at New College, Oxford

Robert Quinney appointed organist at New College, Oxford

ew College, Oxford, has named Robert Quinney as its new organist. He will succeed Edward Higginbottom, who retires in July after a tenure of almost 40 years, during which time he has established New College Choir as one of the powerhouses of the choral scene.

Higginbottom's four decades at New College have included many acclaimed recordings, including two *Gramophone* Award-winners – the choral recital 'Agnus Dei' (Erato, 1/97), which sold 300,000 sets worldwide, and more recently Ludford's *Missa Benedicta* (K617, 8/08). In 2010 New College launched its own label, Novum; its 10th issue – music by Mozart for Salzburg Cathedral – is reviewed on page 100.

It's as an organist that Robert Quinney will be best known to *Gramophone* readers. 'I've no hesitation in saying it's one of the best organ CDs you'll ever hear,' wrote Christopher Nickol of Quinney's recording at Westminster Cathedral of orchestral transcriptions (2/07), one which gloriously demonstrates both the rich colours of the cathedral's Willis organ and Quinney's virtuosity.

More recently, his releases of Bach on the Coro label both earned Editor's Choices. 'Needless to say Quinney delivers finger- and footperfect performances,' said Malcolm Riley of Vol 1, played on the organ of The Queen's College, Oxford. Of Vol 2, played on the organ of Trinity College, Cambridge, Jonathan Freeman-Attwood wrote: 'Quinney's Bach gets to the heart of the music with refreshing clarity and a communication born of genuine understanding.'

Born in 1976, and an organ scholar at King's College, Cambridge, Quinney's posts have included sub-organist at Westminster Abbey (where he reached undoubtedly his widest audience for a single performance – the wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge), and most recently, from April 2013, director of music at Peterborough Cathedral.

'I am delighted to have been appointed to New College, where I will have the daily pleasure of working with one of the world's leading choirs and the opportunity to pursue academic teaching and research interests that have lain rather dormant in my career to this point,' said Quinney. 'It is a tremendous honour to be succeeding Edward Higginbottom, whose performances have inspired me since I began to take an interest in choral music, and under whose direction New College Choir has been so deservedly acclaimed. I'm aware of the size of the shoes I have to fill, but relish the challenge.'

Sir Curtis Price, warden of New College and former principal of the Royal Academy of Music, also paid tribute to Higginbottom, describing him as 'the hardest imaginable act to follow. His total commitment to music in Oxford has been astonishing and sustained over nearly 40 years, and he leaves the New College Choir in fine shape.'

Ivor Bolton to fill vacancy at Spain's flagship opera company

he Teatro Real in Madrid has announced the appointment of the British conductor Ivor Bolton as its music director for five years from the start of the 2015/16 season. Bolton, who lives in Barcelona, served as music director of Glyndebourne Touring Opera in the 1990s and has since developed a varied conducting career in Europe.

The appointment will be seen as a stabilising act for the Madrid company,

Aurora Orchestra signs to Warner Classics in three-album deal

The London-based chamber orchestra Aurora will record three albums for Warner Classics for international release. The first album, 'Road Trip', will be issued in the autumn and will include John Adams's Chamber Symphony, Copland's *Appalachian Spring* and Charles Ives's 'The Housatonic at Stockbridge' from *Three Places in New England*, alongside arrangements of traditional folksongs by Nico Muhly.

Eva Wagner-Pasquier to stand down from the Bayreuth Festival

Since 2008 the Bayreuth Festival has been managed by Richard Wagner's great-granddaughters Katharina Wagner and Eva Wagner-Pasquier, with Katharina directing some productions and Eva overseeing the administration and casting. Now Eva has announced that she will stand down at the end of the 2015 season.

Last year, the Bayreuth production of *Lobengrin* conducted by Andris Nelsons was acclaimed by *Gramophone*'s Arnold Whittall, who wrote: 'It is a remarkable experience to see how effectively the performers respond to the conductor's as well as the producer's interpretations of this troubling transitional work' (10/12).

Special celebrations for Sir Neville Marriner's 90th birthday

In a first for the commercial radio station, Classic FM will mark the conductor Sir Neville Marriner's 90th birthday

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which has been without a music director for three years.

Recently, Bolton's recording of Handel's *Theodora*, filmed at the Salzburg Festival in 2009, was awarded a *Gramophone* Editor's Choice, with David Vickers concluding that 'the musical provision from the classy team of the Freiburg Baroque Orchestra and Ivor Bolton is exemplary at letting Handel do the talking' (10/11).

Bolton has form in Romantic repertoire too. His recording of Bruckner's Third Symphony with the Mozarteum Orchestra was also awarded an Editor's Choice (8/09), with Richard Osborne writing: 'This admirable new CD might be said to have the market at its mercy.'



Sir Neville Marriner celebrates his 90th

on April 15 by playing Marriner's recordings exclusively for 24 hours.

The station will also broadcast Sir Neville's 90th-birthday concert from the Royal Festival Hall on April 4. The concert, which will be recorded on April 1, will comprise Saint-Saëns's *Introduction and Rondo capriccioso* (with violinist Joshua Bell), Mozart's Piano Concerto No 20 (with Murray Perahia) and Elgar's *Enigma* Variations.

CBSO violinist Michael Seal to become full-time conductor

After 23 years' service in the CBSO's second violins, Michael Seal has decided that a career change is in order. Following the performance of Bartók's *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* on July 2 (with conductor Edward Gardner), Seal will put down his bow and pick up the conductor's baton full-time.

Seal is already the CBSO's assistant conductor and was at the helm for a recording of works for piano and orchestra by Medtner, Prokofiev and Scriabin with soloist Veronika Ilinskaya for Landor (7/10).

BBC undertakes major celebration of 18th-century music in April

he BBC – via Radio 3, BBC
Two and BBC Four – will be
donning its powdered wig and
tricorn hat for the month of April to
celebrate the 18th century. The
season, styled 'Eighteenth Century
Britain: Majesty, Music and Mischief',
will embrace history, music and
politics in programmes that will run
over the three networks.

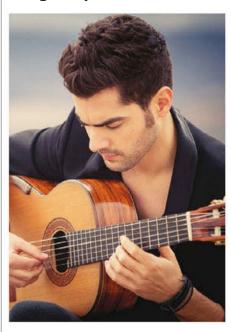
On BBC Two, Amanda Vickery (see My Music, page 154) and Tom Service will present Messiah at the Foundling Hospital, which will recreate the London performance of Handel's Messiah that was effectively the world's first charity benefit concert and which saw artists and philanthropists coming together to support dispossessed children. On BBC Four, Suzy Klein explores the way music became an art form of mass appeal across a century that saw the eight-year-old Mozart writing his first symphonies in London, Handel defining the English oratorio and Haydn, lauded by London society, presenting his new symphonies in the British capital. Her three-part series is entitled The Music That Made Britain - Patriotism, Pleasure and Perfection.

Tenor Rolando Villazón tells the story of the premiere of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*. Working with Collegium 1704, conductor Václav Luks and a group of Czech singers, the programme explores not just *Don Giovanni*'s appeal but its exploration of darker issues. A complete performance of the opera, recorded at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, in Kasper Holten's new production and with Mariusz Kwiecień in the title-role, will be aired on BBC Four.



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PODCASTS

Mercury/DG guitarist Miloš Karadaglić talks to James Jolly about recording the most famous of all guitar concertos, Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez* (an Editor's Choice in the March issue of *Gramophone*) with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under conductor Yannick Nézet-Séguin.

GALLERIES

This month's new online galleries include an exploration of the Royal Festival Hall's newly restored and reinstalled mighty Harrison & Harrison organ, plus images from an exhibition of composers and songwriters celebrating 100 years of PRS for Music, which was held at Getty Images Gallery.

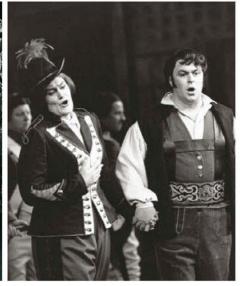
AND THERE'S MORE...

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From left to right: With Joan Sutherland in Lucia di Lammermoor at the Opera Guild of Greater Miami (now Florida Grand Opera) in 1965 - this marked Pavarotti's first performance in the US; as Nemorino in L'elisir d'amore at the Teatro alla Scala, Milan, in 1971; with Sutherland in La fille du régiment at Covent Garden, London, in 1966

THE BIRTHOF ALEGEND

In the late 1960s and early '70s, Pavarotti's voice evolved into a thing of great beauty. As Decca releases a box-set of the tenor's first decade of recordings, Philip Kennicott charts Pavarotti's progress from callow artist to self-sustaining singer

n the end, it seemed that Luciano Pavarotti may have lost his original audience, those passionate opera lovers who remembered an eager young tenor with a honey-coloured voice and absolute fearlessness in the most daunting bars of Donizetti and Bellini. Pavarotti the arena idol, the ubiquitous singer of 'Nessun dorma', the crossover artist crooning with Sting, Bono and Stevie Wonder, eclipsed the early Pavarotti. Of course, you could still hear the early Pavarotti on recordings, and occasionally remember how extraordinarily charismatic he could be on stage when flashes of the old eagerness and charm showed through the mask of smiling boredom he wore in his later years. For many passionate opera lovers, Pavarotti's voice eventually became rather like the voice of a politician who has lingered too long on the public stage: so familiar that even its old eloquence began to cloy. It was impossible, in a way, to actually hear Pavarotti while Pavarotti the superstar was still alive.

He's been dead for more than six years now, and it's time to resurrect the greatness of the early Pavarotti. A new edition from Decca surveys the years between his first recording of five arias – 'Che gelida manina' from *La bohème*, 'E lucevan le stelle' from *Tosca*, and 'Questa o quella', 'La donna è mobile' and 'Parmi veder le lagrime mia' from *Rigoletto* – in 1964 and the mid-1970s when he conquered several of the major Puccini roles on disc. 'Luciano Pavarotti: The First Decade'

is a spectacular reminder of the young artist's ambition, his natural ease with the *bel canto* line, his incredible breath support, his brilliantly intuitive singing, and his once-in-acentury vocal gifts. It invites the listener to set aside many of the more complicated feelings about Pavarotti that emerged in later years. And it lets you play an illuminating game: listen to this voice and imagine that it doesn't belong to Pavarotti, that it wasn't destined to be the only operatic voice many listeners could identify, that it belonged to an earnest and winning young man named Luciano who had not yet conquered the world, or succumbed to any of the temptations of celebrity.

This is a document of the innocent Pavarotti, the accomplished but still slightly callow artist, the singer who is still working so desperately hard to win over his audience. One of the delights of this edition is a bonus disc that includes five tracks from a recently discovered recording of Pavarotti's stage debut, in 1961, at the Teatro Municipale in Reggio Emilia. The audience is thrilled by his first 'Che gelida manina', just as they would be thrilled by his Rodolfos for decades to come. The sound quality is good enough to hear Pavarotti clearly, though he and the other singers go in and out of focus from time to time. But it clearly registers a detail that one almost never hears in subsequent recordings – a tendency to short phrases and somewhat disconnected lines. The elasticity

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From left to right: Herbert von Karajan (fifth from left), producer Ray Minshull, Pavarotti, Mirella Freni, Elizabeth Harwood and Nicolai Ghiaurov recording Bohème, 1972

By the early 70s, everything he sings

is incisive, with a distinctive snap, as

if he is physically grabbing at each note'

and rock-solid tonal support aren't quite there yet, though the top notes are already gorgeous.

And there are moments of actual sloppiness in that first official Decca recording he made three years later. Pavarotti's longtime manager Herbert Breslin wrote in 2004 that Decca wasn't yet convinced it had a star on their hands: 'They didn't exactly give Luciano red-carpet treatment in the making of it... They flew him in, snapped a picture to put on the cover, did the whole recording in a couple of takes and told him they'd send some copies when they were done.' Pavarotti is at times slightly behind the beat, and his top notes have that distinct measure of

ostentation that one hears in so many less-than-memorable young tenors.

In 1981, years after that first Extended Play debut album, Pavarotti sat down with Richard Bonynge, Joan

Sutherland and Marilyn Horne for a fascinating film *How to* sing bel canto (available to view on YouTube). In an elegant domestic setting with a piano, they sang snatches of this and that, and talked about the technique and style of the reinvented art form. Pavarotti explained what it meant to cover the top tones, and sang a line the wrong way - bright, open, and pale - and then the right way, in the voice everyone on the planet could recognise. The false tone he deliberately produced for that film can be heard occasionally in the 1964 album, where his voice doesn't yet have that extra measure of darkness and heft. You can imagine that this is the voice of an anonymous young tenor who had a few years of singing Rodolfo and Edgar, before passing into obscurity. Something isn't quite there yet. But by 1966, when he sang the relatively small tenor role of Orombello in Bellini's Beatrice di Tenda with Sutherland and Bonynge, the voice has become the one we know today. The bottom has filled out, the breathing is more natural, and some of the Pavarotti quirks - the endearing flashes of passion that he interjects into

the line, usually with more musical than textual purpose – are already there.

As an experiment, I decided to listen first not to the arias – and this edition includes an early excerpts-album of Donizetti and Verdi as well as a recital album of Italian songs – but to the musical middle bits, the ensembles and dialogues that do the essential dramatic work of the opera. I wanted to hear how Pavarotti constructed a role, how he managed the drama and characterisation, as opposed to the pure expressive outbursts. If in later life an evening with Pavarotti at the opera house often felt like everyone who wasn't Pavarotti was dutifully

singing in his shadow, from this first Bellini opera through to the still unrivalled *La favorita* he recorded in 1974, he proves a magnificent ensemble singer. He seems to serve Sutherland, and when their lines are

intertwined or in close parallel motion, the voices are as effortlessly fused as when Sutherland sang with Marilyn Horne.

And there is a clear and consistent quality to Pavarotti's singing in these middle spaces that goes beyond mere vocal beauty: a tendency to precipitateness. If he lingers a bit luxuriously behind the orchestra in those first arias from 1964, by the time he made that astonishing string of Bellini and Donizetti operas in the late 1960s and early '70s, he is relentlessly impetuous, jumping into his notes, constantly pushing things forward. Everything he sings is incisive, with a distinctive snap, as if he is physically grabbing at each note.

It's a habit that suggests eagerness, and at this point in his life, he was very eager indeed. Most accounts of his career chart a slow start: a decade or more separates his 1961 debut and his rise to fame independent of Sutherland a decade or more later. There was a Covent Garden debut in the autumn of 1963 after Giuseppe di Stefano pulled out of a run of *Bohèmes*. The late critic John Steane remembered hearing

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him at the Royal Opera two years after that, in *La Sonnambula*, again with Sutherland, but Pavarotti had yet to make an overwhelming impression on most listeners: 'It remains very vivid to me, for in the intervals the people I met wanted to talk about Sutherland and I wanted to talk about "the tenor".' And this was two years after his engagement by Sutherland and Bonynge for a 1963 Australian tour that is often credited as the event that launched him on his path to greatness. Later, famously, he said that this period of intensive collaboration with Sutherland helped him develop his breathing technique – which I think can be clearly heard by comparing the 1961 *Bohème* excerpts with the full-length account made with Herbert von Karajan and Mirella Freni in 1972.

Sutherland was attracted to Pavarotti, in part, because of his stature. On stage, he didn't seem quite so ridiculous as other, shorter tenors next to her towering 6ft 2in height. But it was a brilliant partnership on a musical level as well, and led to a succession of recordings that have been, for decades now, the definitive touchstones for the essential operas of Donizetti and Bellini. It also kept him securely in repertoire that was exactly right for his voice. In retrospect, these early roles seem brilliantly well chosen, both vocally and for Pavarotti's always rather minimal acting skills. The tendency to attack the line though never a musically ugly way - allows the singer to present a credible sense of Donizetti's dopey swains and Bellini's self-destructive heroes. They are always rushing into things, joyfully crashing through the comic universe or desperately weaving their own demise with little sense of the consequences of their actions.

Pavarotti's Tonio in *La fille du régiment* (a relatively rare recording of him singing in French, though the bonus disc includes some fascinating bits from Massenet) is impulsive and cocksure, with a winning sense of his own charisma. 'Ah! mes amis, quel jour de fête' isn't just a musical marvel of nature, a document of one of the most naturally gifted singers of the past century, it is also an expression of Tonio's character, his joy in life, his pinnacle of happiness. Those nine high Cs aren't just stunts, they propel the character, the music and the drama forward, and no one has ever sung them better. Later in the same act, when he raises a glass to toast France and asserts his new identity and new loyalty, the voice seems to clench at the line 'Jamais! jamais! plutôt briser mon verre' – a small but striking detail that suggests a brashness under the exuberant high spirits of the character.

Although in later years his Nemorinos lost their sparkle and felt a bit like phoned-in vocal concertos, Pavarotti's 1970 *L'elisir d'amore* portrays a credible character, bumptious but charming. There was a particular personality type, a psychological profile, that fitted both his voice and his stage manner, which made him a great Duke in *Rigoletto* (represented here by the recording he made with Sutherland and Bonynge in 1971) and an even better Riccardo in *Un ballo in maschera* (the 1971 Decca account with Renato Tebaldi is not, unfortunately, included in this set, but there are excerpts). Whether good or evil, the essential Pavarotti character is bathed in sunlight, alive to pleasure, a bit rash and irrepressibly likeable.

Even the more tragic figures feel robust – high-spirited young men who rush unknowingly into misfortune. In his 1974 *La favorita* made with Bonynge and Fiorenza Cossotto, he sings with two basic expressive modes – a light, sunny, almost delicately quivering tenor, and a darker, tighter, more focused voice. And by toggling between these two basic tonal qualities, he somehow manages to project an affecting Fernando. Listen to him in the end of Act 3, when the first aspersions are cast

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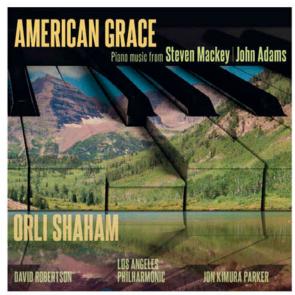
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From left to right: Joan Sutherland, Nicolai Ghiaurov, Pavarotti and Anita Caminada making preparations to record Bellini's I puritani in Kingsway Hall, London, in 1973

upon him and his beloved newlywed Leonora. The drama is all in the voice, which seems to coil up ever so slightly, as if turning from polished pine to dark mahogany.

As I've already suggested, no one ever declared Pavarotti a great actor, but if you spend time away from the two- or three-dozen arias that remain so well known, so familiar from his distinctive renditions, you do find a kind of acting, rather

like one hears in good oratorio singers. It is vocal acting, a matter of small degrees of colour and inflection. Where the text is complicated, we sometimes get less of what Pavarotti does best, which always feels like an elegant surfing on the line. In later years, the pure effortlessness of his singing became a dramatic foil. Beauty was everywhere, but nuance often hard to find. If you asked those who know Pavarotti only from his many traversals of 'Nessun dorma' what that aria is about, what the basic mood of the music is, I doubt very many people would have a clue based on the superheated, muscular way Pavarotti came to sing it. But in 1971, as Edgardo, all the dramatic data is fully in place; it's also evident in the basic vocal profile he creates in 'Orrida e questa note' at the beginning of Act 3 of Lucia di Lammermoor.

And when the music carries the majority of the weight, in songs and sacred works that allow you to drift off

from the nuance of the text, the pleasure of Pavarotti's singing is unalloyed. In 1973, in Bologna, Pavarotti and Bonynge recorded a recital album of arias and songs, including some classic bits of lovely fluff by Tosti, and five favourite Bellini chestnuts set to Metastasio, Fumaroli and Pindemonte. One could quibble that even the most trivial of these pieces has a

text and a truly great singer would dig into those words a little more than Pavarotti does. But that would be churlish. This is music that seems to sing itself, and it flows out of Pavarotti in such wonderful, purling streams of golden sound that you are inevitably seduced away from any kind of resistance.

Or take the tenor part from the Verdi Requiem he recorded with Sir Georg Solti in Vienna in 1967. From his opening Kyrie,

the voice is suffused with anguish and intensity, to the point that it is only in later phrases that the ear detects the The 'Ingemisco' may be the most beautiful ever recorded, and one hears more of the whole range of Pavarotti's gifts in these three-and-a-half minutes than in many longer, more superficially

dramatic musical statements. He lightens the voice to a daring degree and achieves a tenderness that rivals the best moments of his 1972 Rodolfo from La bohème. My only quibble with how this edition deals with Pavarotti's contributions to sacred music is the absence of the Rossini Stabat mater recorded in 1971. With luck, perhaps the next instalment will include the magnificent Rossini Petite messe solennelle from 1977.

The wonder of Pavarotti's career was its longevity, and while this edition covers only the first decade of his recorded oeuvre, it contains the seeds of that longevity. I hesitate to

read too much into those tracks from 1961 on the bonus disc – the sound can't be entirely trusted - but I hear in them a good but minor tenor steeped in a rather old-fashioned style of Italian singing. I believe this Pavarotti could have moved audiences, as he clearly did, for a time; I'm not sure he would have still been singing in 2006. Something changes in those early years, and

'This is music that flows out of bim in such wonderful, purling more natural, limber Pavarotti sound. streams of golden sound that you are inevitably seduced'



Recording Verdi's Ernani with Richard Bonynge, London, 1987

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Rehearsing La bohème with Freni in Berlin in 1972 - an incomparable partnership

the easy explanation is that time in Australia with Sutherland. But that's too facile. Certainly any advice he may have solicited or taken had an impact. But the change is more fundamental than just a matter of breathing. The voice is stitched together and he learns to trust his intuition. He becomes a selfsustaining singer.

Decades later, it became painfully clear that Pavarotti wasn't a terribly intellectual or curious artist, and perhaps the seeds of that are here too. He was a captivating Nemorino, but Nemorino is not a role to spend a lifetime singing. Nor the Duke from Rigoletto or even Rodolfo, though many tenors plough this small field for decades. Plácido Domingo was, by contrast, probing and restless, and that restlessness made him as exciting an artist in his sixties as he was in his thirties. Pavarotti didn't take that route. But there's no reason to linger too much on that in this story. In the music represented here, there is nothing but vitality, a gorgeous artlessness and an enduring appeal. 6 To read a survey of Pavarotti's recording career by John Steane, visit gramophone.co.uk/feature/pavarotti-and-gramophone

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REDRAWING BRUCKNER

The view of Bruckner's symphonies as vast musical statements is challenged by a 'miniaturised' version of the Second by Antony Payne. Now recorded by Trevor Pinnock, this 'bare-boned Bruckner' raises wider questions about the composer's intentions, writes Philip Clark

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very February for the past three years, Trevor Pinnock and a carefully chosen group of top-notch instrumental students from the Royal Academy of Music in London have stepped back in time to 1920s Vienna to experience the world of Arnold Schoenberg and his Society for Private Music Performance. To those who consider Schoenberg the root of everything that went wrong with modern composition during the 20th century, the idea thus invoked of Masonic secret rooms - nod twice and ask for Arnold - where cut-throat atonal music was played before an audience of 12-tone cronies feels like all the justification needed to monster Schoenberg for being elitist and aloof, a composer whose instincts led him to lurk in the shadows. The truth, though, is rather different. The importance of 'performance' overrode 'private', and Schoenberg was unambiguous in his intent. His society existed for the delectation of genuine music lovers, bringing them can-do chamber arrangements of unwieldy and expensive-tomount orchestral works that they otherwise would have been unlikely to hear. Critics were banned, and audiences were required to commit ahead by subscribing, often arriving at concerts having no idea what they were about to hear.

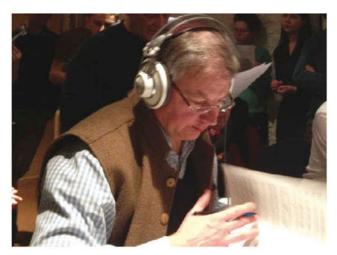
All of which leaves a big, fat 21st-century question hanging. Why revive the ideals of Schoenberg's Society now – performing mini arrangements of Mahler, Debussy and

Zemlinsky – when all the music we could ever want to hear, and as composers actually orchestrated it, is but a mouse-click away? In 2012, the first year of the RAM's project to explore the milieu around Schoenberg's Society the focus was on the reduced orchestration made by Schoenberg pupil Erwin Stein of Mahler's Symphony No 4 and an arrangement of Debussy's *Prélude à L'après-midi d'un faune* by another Schoenberg protégé Benno Sachs. This year Pinnock and the students are working on Mahler's *Lieder eines fabrenden Gesellen* and Zemlinsky's *Six Maeterlinck Songs*. But in 2013, something wholly unexpected landed on their music stands: a chamber version of Bruckner's Second Symphony arranged by the British composer of Elgar's Third, Anthony Payne.



Trevor Pinnock: 'Any idea that there is a "right" version is completely wrong'

'If we were going to do a Bruckner symphony, clearly it had to be the Second' – Jonathan Freeman-Attwood



 $\label{lem:condition} \textbf{Jonathan Freeman-Attwood, who instigated the project and produced the CD}$

It was Jonathan Freeman-Attwood, Royal Academy of Music principal and regular Gramophone contributor, who had approached Payne with the idea of making a Bruckner arrangement. As the arranger puts it in the bookletnotes accompanying the new CD that documents his Brucknerian handiwork, 'I was stunned'. Payne, together with Freeman-Attwood and Trevor Pinnock, have today gathered together in the principal's office at the RAM to talk through the pros, pitfalls and practicalities of reduced orchestration and small-scale Bruckner.

I open by stating that until I pressed the 'play' button on my CD player, I had absolutely no idea of what a chamber-ensemble remake of Bruckner might sound like. I ask Payne if, after he was buttonholed by Freeman-Attwood, a sound world suggested itself immediately to him? Or did he only discover how to solve the problem of small-scale Bruckner through the process of writing? 'I was utterly poleaxed when Jonathan asked me,' he says, 'because I'm not especially a Brucknerian. I knew three or four of the symphonies well, but not the Second, and my realisation of how this might work dawned somewhere between the two extremes you suggest. I looked at the score for about an hour, and thought, well, the brass are present but are not as dramatically in the picture as in the later symphonies. I certainly couldn't envisage this idea working for those later symphonies – not the Seventh, Eighth or Ninth;

can you imagine! – but I could see how the Second might be made to work. And immediately I thought of the ensemble that eventually I used.'

'If we were going to do a Bruckner symphony,' Freeman-Attwood explains, 'clearly it had to be the Second. We'd have come a cropper with the late symphonies simply because those layers of harmonic activity are more than the form can take, and the sheer variety of texture would have been an insurmountable problem. At this scale the structure of the Second was always going to be a challenge – its structure is no less ambitious than the First, and probably a little less ambitious than the Third – but the melodic language and harmonic resonances of the Second seem to me to be distilled from pre-Wagnerian sources. The First Symphony has its *Tannhäuser* moments and

And so much about Bruckner interpretation rests in the realm of speculation that it is startling indeed to hear one of the composer's symphonies arranged for chamber ensemble, Bruckner pinned down, each leg and muscle and note cell lying spreadeagle on an aural dissection table from where every harmonic twitch can be examined - all that Brucknerian bare bone without any of the orchestral flesh. Payne has retained just enough instrumental firepower to make the music function: a string sextet in place of a full string section, a single trumpet and trombone standing in for the full contingent of brass, with the woodwind section compacted down to flute, oboe and pairs of clarinets and bassoons. Every note the timpani plays in the orchestral version transfers over, and Payne's salon orchestra is subliminally

cushioned and bolstered by piano and harmonium.

Arrangements of the length and complexity of Stein's Mahler Fourth – for an ensemble not dissimilar to Payne's Bruckner set-up – were rare at the Society's evenings. Smaller numbers of players, like the ensemble deployed for Berg's arrangement of Strauss Jr's Wine, Women and Song, which is paired with Bruckner's symphony on the new disc, were more the norm. Arranging Bruckner's piece, Freeman-Attwood says, 'stretches the boundaries', but all around us similar risks are being taken. Look elsewhere in this issue and you'll find a review of Gilbert Kaplan and Rob Mathes's chamber reduction of Mahler's Resurrection Symphony, while the London-based Aurora Orchestra have made miniaturism a speciality of the house, commissioning the composer Iain Farrington to make arrangements of Mahler's Das Lied von der Erde, Symphony No 1 and Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen, as well as music from Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*. I suppose this article is what they would call at music journalist college a 'trend piece'.

'Although this Bruckner arrangement doesn't exactly fit with Schoenberg's ideals of chamber arrangement,' Freeman-Attwood asserts, 'it does pose the same essential questions. What do you gain and what do you lose? Having something one's ears are used to hearing on a vast scale pared down in these expert hands – what does that tell us about the music?' One very specific gain in terms of Bruckner is that suddenly interpreters are liberated from those complex ruminations about which version of the Second Symphony to perform – 1872, 1873, 1876, 1877 or 1892. Payne based his arrangement around Robert Haas's edition of the 1877 version, but Trevor Pinnock used the opportunity to imagine an idealised version with material collated from all the available sources.

'Any idea that there is a "right" version is a completely wrong way of thinking,' Pinnock says, pressing the point hard. 'The Second Symphony was a perpetual work in progress which meant he might actually lose something valuable when he made cuts. But he's making versions for different situations and as a musician



A Society for Private Music Performance programme from 1920

this is very understandable, even if that might be less desirable to those who prefer to have everything neatly pigeonholed. To my amazement I found Bruckner's own score online, and that discovery was the moment I began to find most out about the music. You find quite a number of the changes we've become accustomed to but there's also a very fascinating central section, completely rewritten, of the slow movement with a violin solo that doesn't appear in any published score.

'Thinking about how to conduct Bruckner,' Pinnock advises, 'you must never forget that he was a great improviser. I feel he may have improvised lots of this material but then wanted to make sure that he could slot it into the Classical forms correctly, and you have this care about Classical form allied to tremendously forward-looking material, harmonically. The form was Bruckner's "check" on himself. Some of the more

advanced harmonies from earlier versions don't feature in our performance because reintroducing that material would have upset the structural balance, especially in the last movement.'

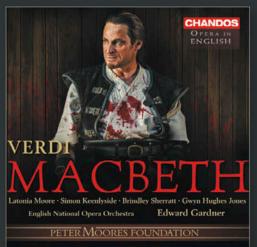
During the second-edit stage of the recording process, Pinnock realised that he wasn't happy with the pacing of the material in the finale; the structure was reordered which, Freeman-Attwood says, 'transformed it and, actually, the small number of players and the flexibility of Tony's arrangement made finding a clear and convincing pathway through the finale much easier'. 'I wouldn't necessarily take the same decision on cuts in another circumstance,' Pinnock says. 'For example, there were huge pauses in the first movement when Bruckner first wrote the symphony, which I think must have related to his improvising days in the wonderful acoustic of St Florian, but later he cut them by about half. Depending on the forces and the acoustic space available, I could well take different decisions in future performances and recordings, and I think this would have been very understandable to Bruckner.'

That the Second Symphony lends itself to such flexibility and debate is perhaps a good enough reason to big up the instrumental downsize idea, but now's the time, I think, to throw a rider into the middle of this cosy consensus. Balancing timpani against a body of orchestral strings is fair game, but there's no getting away from the acoustic reality that pitching timpani against a string sextet upsets the proportional instrumental weight inherent within classical ensembles. The timpani become foregrounded, a natural heavyweight now boxing clever against a medium-weight string section. How was that problem resolved? Does Payne even consider it to have been a problem?

'When you look at my score, you see those big wind and timpani chords and it looks like a full orchestral score,' he replies, 'but that's slightly misleading because you've only got single strings. But even so, I felt everything the timpani plays should be included in the chamber version, and I had to rely on my ear knowing that Trevor and the players would take care of

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for a new quartet by Simon Rowland-Jones - to be given its world premiere by the Doric String Quartet during the Festival.

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it.' 'And, Tony, we had a wonderfully sensitive timpani player who made sure that it was never a problem,' Pinnock chips in. 'Part of my concern was the residual idea I had of the massive writing of Bruckner from the later symphonies and I couldn't separate the association properly until we were in rehearsal and then I realised that, actually, this is fine.'

Jonathan Freeman-Attwood mentions that the wind and brass players also held back when necessary during rehearsal, rebalancing their natural orchestral instincts to accommodate the smaller string section. He sings the main theme of Bruckner's *Scherzo* as it would normally be played by a symphony orchestra – long sustained notes, filled with air – and then imitates what he describes as the *staccato* 'nutty' quality of the same passage as performed in this chamber arrangement.

'If you reduce things to their essence, you begin to hear the structure; to hear with very real clarity how important Schubert was to Bruckner' – Trevor Pinnock

But, playing devil's advocate, I say that for many listeners, orchestral mass and sustained notes filled with air is the whole point of Bruckner. 'But equally,' Freeman-Attwood retorts, 'you might say that the intimacy of the strings lends the trio section of the *Scherzo* a Ländler quality that, ironically, sounds more like chamber music than Bruckner's String Quintet which, to me, always sounds like a symphony in five parts.' And, I suggest, the second subject group of the first movement becomes pure Schubert: nods all round.

'Thinking about why people would make these sort of arrangements,' Pinnock says, 'your point about Schubert is a good one. We go back to a time when all sorts of arrangements were made. People learnt music by sitting down to play it, and it's hard for us to imagine a time when there was no recorded music. But if you go through this process of reducing things to their essence, you begin to hear through the piece. You hear the structure; you begin to hear with very real clarity how important Schubert was to Bruckner. When we started the series with Mahler's Fourth I was amazed at how this clarified the piece so that one saw through the structure. Mahler uses massive forces, but that piece lends itself well to arrangement because he splits the orchestra into chamber units.'

That said, the arrangement of Mahler's Fourth noticeably loses instrumental momentum during the *Scherzo*, when the default use of a piano to pad out the textures feels defeatist: an admission that some aspects of Mahler's orchestral music will forever be writ large. I like that in Payne's Bruckner, the piano and harmonium shore up the ensemble while remaining essentially invisible. Pianos have little place within Mahler's sound world, even less so in Bruckner's.

'The piano and harmonium fulfil a specific purpose,' Payne explains. 'If your ear hears a trumpet at the top of a chord and the rest of that chord is supplied by a harmonium, the illusion is created of three trumpet players.' Pinnock suggests that the piano largely works with the bass line and has almost a continuo function 'but sometimes in massively scored sections it doubles the first violins: you don't hear the piano, but what you do hear is the first violin sufficiently strong'. 'Yes, it gives violins a zing,' Payne says, 'and in the last few pages we really did need the piano to provide the ensemble with a middle. I've been working on arrangements quite a bit recently, but I'm not really what

you'd call "an arranger" and I'm constantly amazed at what can be achieved.'

Pinnock needs to rehearse. Mahler and Zemlinsky are calling, and our time is drawing to a close. And with another reduced-score project about to come to fruition, I ask what the three men now know about Bruckner's symphony that they didn't know before. What has miniaturising Bruckner taught them? 'That it's bombproof,' Freeman-Attwood concludes. 'The spirit of the piece, that wonderful oxygenated quality in Bruckner's writing, you can't do anything to change that. And in the very best sense this is an up-to-date view of Bruckner, a composer who in my view has been owned for too long by dogmatic musicologists pinning their colours to either the Haas or Novak mast. You find musical solutions; and if that means that you take something from 1873 and add a bit from 1877, you do it.'

'This symphony is not related to Wagner,' Payne reflects, 'but to the spirit of Renaissance polyphony.' Pinnock concurs, adding: 'I think it's a very inner, personal piece and so it doesn't fit well into the settled view people have of Bruckner and his loud musical statements.'

Personally, I hear the ideals of Schoenberg's Private Performance Society coming full circle. When multiple versions of all the music you could ever want to hear are indeed but a mouse-click away, there's a natural desire to rationalise this bewildering information-overload to an essence: to temporarily bypass the same old arguments about where Bernstein's Mahler stands in relation to Karajan's, or how 1873 measures against 1877, and instead focus on a way of saying something about the thing itself. **G**

To read Gramophone's review of the reduced Bruckner Symphony No 2, turn to page 58; to read the review of Kaplan and Mathes's reduced Mahler 'Resurrection' Symphony No 2, turn to page 61

RECOMMENDED RECORDINGS

Four more arresting arrangements to explore



Mahler (arr Stein):
Symphony No 4
Sónia Grané sop
Royal Academy of
Music Ensemble /

Trevor Pinnock

Linn 🖲 🎂 CKD438 (7/13)

The beginning of the RAM's Schoenberg cycle; a smaller child's vision of heaven.



Shostakovich (arr Viktor Derevianko): Symphony No 15 Gidon Kremer vn

Clemens Hagen vc Vadim Sakharov pf/cels Peter Sadlo, Edgar Guggeis, Michael Gärtner perc

Chamber Orchestra of Europe / Rudolf Barshai

DG (\$) (2) 477 5442GTA2 (12/05)

Authorised by Shostakovich, this arrangement of his 15th Symphony highlights the toy-town fantasy of the original.



Mahler (arr Schoenberg): Das Lied von der Erde Monica Groop mez

Jorma Silvasti ten Lahti Chamber Ensemble / Osmo Vänskä BIS (P) BISCD681 (7/95)

Never performed at a Society concert, Schoenberg's reimagined Song of the Earth contains many subtle shadings, as Vänskä discovers.



Beethoven (arr MG Fischer): Symphony No 6, Pastoral Cologne

String Sextet

CAvi-Music ® AVI8553258

This version of Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony arranged for six strings goes down a storm, coupled here with Augusto Valente's Six to Midnight.

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Maestro in motion

David Zinman built up Zurich's Tonhalle Orchestra from a disgruntled band playing under 40 conductors a year to a united ensemble with a fine reputation. As he prepares to step down after nearly 20 years, the American conductor talks to James Jolly about how he did it

he Norwegian pianist Leif Ove Andsnes tells a story about rehearsing the Schumann Piano Concerto with David Zinman. When they reached the last movement and that passage where Schumann pits a rhythm in two against one in three - and generally gives conductors a hard time -Zinman's stick technique was faultless. Everyone was together until the conductor started singing along a naughty lyric about Clara Schumann in the shower.

The rehearsal ground to a halt, but the tricky passage had been played perfectly and the tension evaporated as laughter took hold. Zinman is legendary for his sense of humour, as well as for being one of the finest conductors around today.

Now 78, American conductor David Zinman is stepping down this summer as music director of Zurich's Tonhalle



 $Zinman\ and\ the\ or chestra\ that\ takes\ its\ name\ from\ the\ majestic\ Zurich\ hall,\ the\ Tonhalle$

Orchestra, after a reign of nearly 20 years. It has been a distinguished innings, and one that has been memorialised in some highly successful recordings, not least of which was a Beethoven cycle that has notched up sales well into the millions. As Zinman prepares to hand over his baton to the young Frenchman Lionel Bringuier, I took the opportunity, at his home in Zurich, to reflect with him on his Swiss years. 'I'd guest-conducted the orchestra off and on for

a number of years but it would always be at six- or seven-year intervals and I always enjoyed them. They'd got to a point where they were looking for a music director and I was invited to kind of try out. So I said to them, "Look. I'd like to do three programmes just to show what I can do in different types of music". So I did an ordinary Beethoven/Brahms programme.

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'Orchestral players have to see a conductor reflecting what they know to be on the page. If they see that, they're happy and then they can do their best'

I did one that was all American music with very young composers – the stuff I recorded in Baltimore – and I did a romantic programme with Tchaikovsky and that kind of thing and then they could decide from these three programmes whether they wanted me or not. And it turned out they wanted me and so I came. The orchestra was just going through a kind of state of flux – the concertmaster retired, the first cellist retired, and some younger players came in, along with a new concertmaster, first cello, first viola.'

inman is a fine orchestra trainer: he knows what an ensemble needs to do to improve, having built a tight and responsive band during his time in Baltimore (1985-1998) where he'd begun to introduce a historically informed approach to performing music of the Classical period. And it stood him in excellent stead in Zurich. 'Changing

first-desk players alters an orchestra a great deal,' he explains. 'The whole style of the orchestra changes with the leaders, but in this case one of the replacement leaders for the man who retired was not young, he was middle-aged and a kind of old-world violinist from Slovenia - his name was Primož Novšak - but he had been a concertmaster of the Sacher Chamber Orchestra and Zurich Chamber Orchestra so he knew the whole situation. Then we got a very young first cellist, Thomas Grossenbacher, and he replaced a very fine cellist. It was a time of change and I came in and I found the orchestra to be very good. But there was a great deal of negative press about the orchestra – they felt the players were like businessmen, people who do their duty and then go home. I must admit I didn't find them that way but I could see how that might have been seen to be the case. Someone in the press asked me, "How will you change the orchestra?", and I said it would probably take 10 years before the orchestra could get to the level at which it really should be.

Zinman set in train a process he believes every orchestra should consider for its musical health. 'I looked at it in various ways – who was guest-conducting the orchestra, how many concerts they played, how many concerts they repeated, what types of programme they were playing, and so on. And I saw that they were doing an enormous amount of single concerts without repeats, and they had something like 30 to 40 conductors in a year.' So the first challenge was to guarantee that the right people were working with the Tonhalle Orchestra. He started ensuring that Sawallisch, Haitink and Blomstedt would come and work with the orchestra regularly (as he pointed out, the orchestra could afford it). 'The people I was inviting can also help train an



Starting out: Zinman transformed the Tonhalle players' sound

orchestra. If you had Sawallisch for two or three weeks a year it meant a lot. And I said, "Be careful with the soloists you have and, since we're paying money, why not get better soloists?""

Once the right people were working with the orchestra, Zinman then looked at the ensemble's profile. 'The orchestra wasn't touring much and it wasn't recording at all. I said in order to get an orchestra better you have to start pushing them out on the road. You have to start recording, and I can tell you from the other orchestras I have been with, once you start recording and the musicians can hear themselves, it adds a kind of morale. And suddenly if they made a good recording they'd say, "We play this way". Within two or three years the orchestra just jumped up, mainly because of these three things: guest conductors, touring, recording.'

he recording project that put the Tonhalle Orchestra firmly on the musical map was the Beethoven cycle on Arte Nova. 'The Beethoven series came in about the second or third season - and it was just a fluke. Dieter Ohms had a recording company based in Munich and he was going to record the Beethoven symphonies with somebody else. That project fell apart and so our intendant at the time, Trygve Nordwall, said, "Why don't you do it with the Tonhalle? We can arrange for it." We were very lucky that the city put up some money, as did our president and some of our sponsors. I was very eager to record the Beethovens as I'd done them in Baltimore many times. But I'd been working, working, working for a specific style. The orchestra was young enough to appreciate this style as well, and by this time we'd had a lot of period conductors to work with them. I made sure that people like Brüggen and Norrington came so that I wouldn't be preaching to people who would just reject the approach. So it was a good time.

'I'd never been very happy with the sound that the orchestra received on previous recordings,' Zinman confesses, 'so as I'd been working with Chris Hazell and Simon Eadon in Baltimore I suggested we worked with them. At that time they'd just been let go by Decca and were free. And so we called them up and said, "Why don't you come and do our series for us?" It was a real collaboration and, more important, it was successful.' When the late John Steane reviewed the *Missa solemnis* in July 2002, he concluded that it showed the great work 'in a new light and for the present it goes into my book of revelations'. And that opinion was not an isolated response.



David Zinman conducts Leif Ove Andsnes and the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 2012 - according to the Norwegian pianist, in rehearsals laughter is never far away

When David Zinman was a tyro conductor he worked as assistant to Pierre Monteux, the man who famously conducted the world premiere of Stravinsky's Rite of Spring back in 1913. Like Zinman, Monteux was also famous for his sense of humour. (When signing his contract with the London Symphony Orchestra in 1961 as its new chief conductor, the 86-year-old Monteux insisted on a 25-year contract with a further 25-year option for renewal!) And through Monteux, Zinman would connect with a conducting tradition on which he'd draw throughout his career, not least the Decca connection: when Zinman conducted for a Mozart concerto disc with Alicia de Larrocha back in 1979, the tape operator was none other than a callow Simon Eadon who, with Chris Hazell, has now worked not only on the Beethoven cycle but subsequent series of symphonies by Schubert, Schumann, Brahms, Mahler and orchestral works by Richard Strauss. And the famous 'Decca Tree' that would have captured both Monteux and Zinman's London discs lives on in those Tonhalle recordings, a microphone placing that has ensured a consistently fine sound quality.

hris Hazell, a highly respected composer and arranger as well as a distinguished producer, recalls those Beethoven sessions. 'To be honest, when I was first approached I had my misgivings. I'd never done the Beethoven symphonies before, and I just wondered whether we really needed a new set. But when the sessions started I suddenly realised that things were feeling just a little bit special. It really felt like something was happening and luckily, the reviews were very good and the discs started selling...very well!' When I asked Hazell why Zinman doesn't command the reputation he surely deserves, his

answer was disarmingly simple. 'He's probably too nice! David's a very fine conductor, and a producer's dream. He never throws tantrums, there's never any fuss. He's a team player. He respects that everyone is there to do a job and we all have different roles. The question you'll hear more than any other from him is "What do you need?" If I say "We need more clarinet" he'll go along with it and make sure we get it. He's always happy to respond to requests like that and it works so well.' As Hazell points out, it's 'self-seeding' – if you get good results you'll attract new players. The discipline of recording raises accuracy and ensemble, and though the seating for recording in the Tonhalle requires the players to be spread slightly further apart than for live concerts, they work hard at balance and, as a result, they listen to each other. Few orchestras, Hazell points out, pile into the control room in such vast numbers during playback. 'We have an open-door policy and it saves so much time and energy.'

Zinman is particularly enthusiastic about the Tonhalle itself, a striking hall on the edge of the lake right in the heart of Zurich. 'There's very little manipulation – it's the ideal hall for Beethoven because you can play unbelievably crisply and the sound just continues on. Once we had the success with the Beethoven symphonies, we recorded the concertos and the *Missa solemnis*. We then needed someone to pick up these recordings and it turned out to be BMG and now it's Sony-RCA but throughout we were always with the same team and the same mindset. And we were also extremely lucky to keep recording when everyone seemed to be stopping.'

When Zinman steps down this summer and takes up a purely freelance conducting life, the Tonhalle Orchestra's urbane intendant, Elmar Weingarten, will also hand over the reins. Weingarten came to the orchestra from the Berlin

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Philharmonic where he'd worked during Abbado's period, and when I asked him what made Zinman such a successful leader of the orchestra, his response was unequivocal. 'David is always incredibly fair. He has no favourites, his door is always open and he will also listen to anyone.' Interestingly when I put the same question to Zinman the previous day his answer echoed this. 'I don't socialise with them at all because what happens – and this is just a generalisation – is that those who are not having dinner with the conductor feel "What's wrong with me?" and they don't produce as much, whereas I appreciate everyone in the orchestra. I know who I like best but I never let anyone know who that is. I don't "hang out" with anybody in the orchestra, but I listen to them all the time and I'm interested

I thought to myself, "I'll never be able to keep this together!" But we did it!'

The final disc, reviewed this month, is Mahler's songsymphony, Das Lied von der Erde. 'I think the last movement is the most important piece written in modern times,' Zinman believes. 'That "Abschied" is very special, a very special idea that many people have tried but not really got close. Britten could never get over the idea. It's thrilling to do Mahler symphonies. It's challenging for the players in a way you don't get with other composers. It's like a sport - because to have full energy or full concentration at the end of a big Mahler symphony, say the Ninth, is very challenging. Everything is in the score - variation is extreme. I have my own picture of

'David's a fine conductor, and a producer's dream. He never throws tantrums, there's never any fuss' - Chris Hazell, producer

in their lives as well. And when I leave the orchestra, which is quite soon, I know I shall have social contact with some of the players but then I know I can do it because I'm no longer their boss. What's really interesting for me over these 20 years is that there must have been at least 30 children born in that time – it was a very fertile time for them! - and now I see that I'm the oldest one here and they're all much younger than me.'

ur fascination with conducting will never go away Claudio Abbado's recent death provoked a flurry of interest in this most singular of professions. Can conducting, I asked Zinman, be taught? 'You can point out to conductors where the disconnect is, what's causing it. It can be their own fears, their own psychoses. Or that they don't trust the musicians. Or that they don't trust themselves. If you can get them to think about that, that's a step in the right direction. There's no one way of beating time and I don't try to teach that at all. If it's not clear I say so – it's important to give an up-beat that really means something. It's interesting when someone is conducting well yet you don't see any inner intensity from them. And that's what the orchestra needs. If the music is intense but the conductor's not conveying anything they don't know what to do. They'll do it to the best of their ability but they don't enjoy that. They have to see a conductor reflecting what they know to be on the page. If they see that, they're happy and they can do their best. And the conductor has to allow the orchestra to listen to itself as well. You can't control every factor and the less you control the better it is in a way because you can play like a chamber group. All these musicians play chamber music so they know what that feels like. As conductors get older, their movements get less and less. That's the truth - they've found the way to make it go! They've found the way they expect the orchestra to play. The expectation is so important.'

As Zinman's tenure in Zurich draws to an end, so too does his latest recording commitment, the complete Mahler symphonies. 'We're nearly there! It's been fun to prepare, it's been fun doing it and also working with Chris and Simon on the sound – really getting as much detail into it as we could and also having the big, open sound. The hardest was the Eighth Symphony – we recorded it in the hall, which is actually a bit too small to perform it in, but we took all the seats out, put the orchestra on the floor and put all the choruses on the stage and the singers behind me. But that was really hard! If you've ever stood up in front of a group and the chorus is one mile away you know what I mean!

Mahler in which he's a very saintly person but completely obsessed and monomaniacal about his own music and yet feeling that no one will appreciate it. All of these factors go into it and different conductors take off on these various elements. I don't find him a breast-beating composer at all.'

Zinman's approach has always emphasised the chamber sonorities of the music; it's not Mahler with everything hanging out and it also shows what a fine ensemble Zinman has created in Zurich. 'We've always had this wonderful co-operation. I really admire the orchestra and I've been able, even when there have been crises with different players, to navigate the seas and come over it. I trust them and they trust me.'

Zinman considers himself very lucky over his long career. 'I've had the chance to do all the big pieces I wanted to do. I've touched all the bases. I genuinely feel that if I never had to conduct again I'd still be happy. Of course my wife doesn't think so...!' @

▶ To read Gramophone's review of Mahler's Das Lied von der Erde, turn to page 100

RECOMMENDED RECORDINGS

Four essential Tonhalle/Zinman recordings



Symphonies Nos 3 and 4 Arte Nova ®

74321 59214-2 (2/99)

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ten Franz-Josef Selig bass

Missa solemnis Luba Orgonasova sop Anna Larsson contr Rainer Trost

Schweizer Kammerchor Arte Nova ® 74321 87074-2 (7/02) A revelatory account of Beethoven's great Mass that captures the score's ambition and scope to extraordinary effect.



Bruch. Dvořák Violin Concertos Julia Fischer vn Decca (F) 478 3544DH (6/13)

David Zinman as concerto partner giving ideal support but also bringing great personality to the orchestral part.



Schubert Symphony No 8, 'Unfinished'. Works for violin and orchestra

Andreas Janke vn

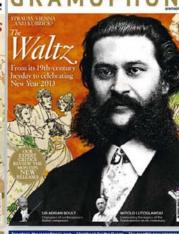
RCA Red Seal © 88697 95335-2 (6/12) **Elegant Schubert from another** of Zinman's symphony cycles; and unusually coupled with short concertante pieces featuring the Tonhalle Orchestra's leader.

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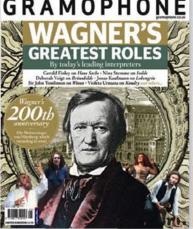
















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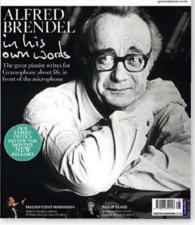


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The 67th festival opens with Neil Bartlett's new production of Britten's Owen Wingrave, plus a screening of the original BBC TV production filmed at Snape in 1970, and a study day. Further highlights include a Chamber Orchestra of Europe residency, a focus on Tristan Murail and a performance of Cage's Musicircus which takes place all over Aldeburgh in venues such as the Jubilee Hall, pubs, shops and private homes. Artists include the Arcanto Quartet. lan Bostridge, the CBSO and Thomas Adès, Richard Goode, the Monteverdi Choir and Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Mark Padmore and Masaaki Suzuki. aldeburgh.co.uk

March 22 - April 6

The theme 'Three Greats: Elgar, Delius, Holst' marks the 80th anniversary of their deaths. Plus there's a David Bednall premiere: Graham Johnson's lecture-recital 'Holst and Exoticism'; Trial by Jury 'from scratch' a community singing day; and 'A Soldier's Tale' - poems set to music, with bass-baritone Christopher Foster, to mark the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War. barnesmusicfestival.com

Bath International Music Festival

May 16-26

Artistic director Alasdair Nicolson builds a programme around the

deadly sins. Highlights include the premiere of Paul Crabtree's The Ghost Train, for six singers and instrumental ensemble based on a stage play by Arnold Ridley and designed to be performed in and around abandoned railway buildings; the Harlem Quartet in their only UK concert this year; and one of the last chances to see The Hilliard Ensemble, alongside saxophonist Jan Garbarek. bathmusicfest.org.uk

BBC Proms

July 18 - September 13

The programme is announced in late April and full details will be published in our July issue - so don't miss it! bbc.co.uk/proms

Early Music Festival

May 21-25

The Society of Strange and Ancient Instruments and dancer Steven Player explore Will Kemp's dance from London to Norwich in 1600, with music of the Elizabethan era. Other offerings include songs by Dowland, Purcell and Schubert from soprano Elin Manahan Thomas and lutenist David Miller; a recreation of a Venetian Carnival from I Fagiolini; and harpsichordist Andreas Staier. ncem.co.uk

Bradfield Festival of Music

June 21-28

Set in the medieval St Nicholas Church in High Bradfield, Yorkshire,



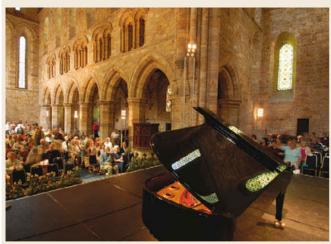


UNUSUAL VENUE... Brinkburn Priory

Brinkburn Music Festival

July 4-6

Conductor and musicologist Gulliver Ralston takes over as artistic director at this festival, held in rural Northumberland in a 12th-century priory. Offering a wide variety of repertoire, the programme includes traditional choral music from The Queen's Six, a male group from St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. Violinist Jennifer Pike plays Vaughan Williams, and The Hilliard Ensemble appear during their farewell tour. brinkburnmusic.org



Escape from it all and experience the peace and tranquillity of this secluded priory

the festival opens with guitarist Miloš Karadaglić and accordionist Ksenija Siderova. Other highlights include pianist Benjamin Grosvenor and cellist Laura Van der Heijden, French music from the Tour de France's 1903 beginnings to the present day, and trombone quartet Bones Apart. bradfieldfestivalofmusic.co.uk

Brighton Festival

May 3-25

Guest directing is Hofesh Shechter (choreographer, musician, composer, performer), whose new contemporary dance piece set to his own score Sun launches the festival. Harrison Birtwistle's 80th birthday is celebrated, including his chamber opera Down by the Greenwood Side. New London Consort play music from 17th- and 18th-century revivals of The Tempest; French jazz clarinettist Louis Sclavis and Amarillis present jazz-Baroque fusion; the Aquarelle Guitar Quartet explore Renaissance music and film scores; Angela Hewitt performs The Art of Fugue; and Svara-Kanti combine Indian rhythms with classical music London Sinfonia and pianists Jonathan Biss and Ashley Fripp.

4 Harps, pianist Haruko Seki and cellist Zoë Martlew. Rounding off, Robert Secret conducts the Orchestra of Stowe Opera in Bruch's Symphony No 3 and Dvořák's Cello Concerto in B minor (with Julian Metzger). buckinghamsummerfestival.org

Bury St Edmund's Festival

Mav 16-25

Aurora Orchestra play Mahler's First in lain Farrington's arrangement for 15 players. The Society of Strange Instruments and dancer Steven Player celebrate Will Kemp's famous 1600 dance; Armonico Consort perform Tallis's Spem in alium; the **Endellion Quartet play Roxanna** Panufnik: harpist Lavinia Meijer performs Ludovico Einaudi and Philip Glass; and RPO members play Burt Bacharach.

buryfestival.co.uk **Buxton Festival**

July 11-27

Productions include Dvořák's The Jacobin; Gluck's Orfeo ed Eurvdice: a concert

with soloists Susan Bullock (soprano) and Richard Berkeley-Steele (tenor). The recital series features baritone Roderick Williams, pianist Sofya Gulyak, mezzo Rosalind Plowright and the Endellion Quartet. buxtonfestival.co.uk

Cambridge Summer Music Festival

July 18 - August 3

Commemorating the First World War, the theme is 'brief lives', featuring composers whose lives were cut short by the war and those who were deeply affected by it. Programmes include Elgar's Spirit of England, Ravel's Tombeau de Couperin and Debussy's Berceuse héroïque. Another highlight is Lucy Parham's words-and-music programme 'Rêverie: The Life and Loves of Claude Debussy', with actor Henry Goodman. There are performances from the Tonhalle Orchestra Zurich and Zürcher Sing-Akademie under Sir Roger Norrington, pianist Joanna MacGregor and oboist Nicholas Daniel.

cambridgesummermusic.com

Carducci Festival

May 16-18

In Highnam, Gloucestershire, the Carducci Quartet join pianist Charles Owen for the first concert. There's violinist Katharine Gowers, and the Katona Twins guitar duo. Other key features include a 'musical picnic' with instrumentalists from local schools. carducciquartet.com/festivals

Cheltenham Music Festival

July 2-13

For its 70th anniversary, the festival launches a brand new proms series. There's also a telling of Michael Morpurgo's First World War tale Private Peaceful in words and music, the premiere of Richard Blackford's The Great Animal Orchestra, Nicola LeFanu's new multimedia chamber opera Tokaido Road and an exclusive

new piece by the late Sir John Tavener, Nicola Benedetti is artist-in-residence: other artists include The Hilliard Ensemble and guitarist Miloš Karadaglić.

> cheltenhamfestivals. com/music

Chichester **Festival**

June 14 - July 13 South Korean pianist Young-Choon Park opens the arts festival with Beethoven and Chopin, Julian

Lloyd Webber marks the centenary of his composer father, William, in a performance of his Aurora with the Worthing Symphony Orchestra. There's also Schubert, Beethoven and Mozart from The Hanover Band; Benjamin Wolf's new piece Pictures from Pallant; Haydn and Brahms from the Badke Quartet; Bach from Romanian violinist Bogdan Vacarescu; and Shostakovich's Cello Sonata played by Alison Holford. festivalofchichester.co.uk

Chipping Campden **Music Festival**

May 11-24

Pianist Lucy Parham and actor Alex Jennings kick off with 'Rêverie', exploring Debussy's intellectual world and complex love life through words compiled and scripted by Parham and the composer's piano works. Other artists include Angela Hewitt, Katva Apekisheva, The Nash Ensemble, Jonathan Biss, Imogen Cooper and Steven Isserlis. Two concerts mark the centenary of the outbreak of the First World War: 'War and Peace' from The Tallis Scholars. and a recital by baritone Christopher Maltman and pianist Julius Drake. campdenmusicfestival.co.uk

City of London Festival

June 22 - July 17

In Paul Gudgin's first year as artistic director, a 'Seoul in the City' series features Korean artists such as conductor Myung-whun Chung. The LSO return to St Paul's to perform Bruckner's Symphony No 9 and Penderecki's Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima under Daniel Harding. Actor Simon Callow joins ASMF for a theatrical exploration of Beethoven. Plus there are intimate recitals in livery halls, street performances in gardens and squares and a new pop-up venue. colf.org

Corbridge **Chamber Music Festival**

August 1-3

Northumberland welcomes the Gould Piano Trio, Rachel Roberts (viola), Ilona Domnich (soprano), Robert Plane (clarinet), Marianne Thorsen (violin) and James MacMillan with his new piano trio. Other works include Schubert's Shepherd on the Rock and Poulenc's La voix humaine. There's also a family concert led by Lenny Sayers.

corbridgefestival.co.uk

Cottier Chamber Project

June 6-20

This year's event at Glasgow's Cottier Theatre encompasses music over





seven centuries under the theme of 'identity'. Concerts include the launch of a Shostakovich string quartet cycle and a new family work by Lenny Sayers for Daniel's Beard and dancers. Artists include violinist Catherine Manson, pianist Alasdair Beatson, cellist Philip Higham, Mr McFall's Chamber, Red Note and the Da Vinci Trio. Free lunchtime concerts in the Hunterian Art Gallery explore Bach's solo string works, and there are late-evening forays into jazz, traditional and world music. cottierchamberproject.com

The Cumnock Tryst

October 2-5

A new festival founded by artistic director James MacMillan and based in the East Ayrshire town of Cumnock, where he grew up. His own works are featured, plus performances from The Sixteen and Nicola Benedetti (also from Avrshire). The festival aims to include members of the local community, and features an ambitious educational project. Venues include the William Burges church of St John the Evangelist, where MacMillan used to play the organ, Old Cumnock Old Church and the spectacular Dumfries House. thecumnocktryst.com

Dorset Opera Festival

July 22-26

The festival celebrates turning 40 with two productions: Philip Thomas conducts Beethoven's *Fidelio*, starring Lee Bisset and Mark S Doss; and Verdi's *Aida* is directed by Paul Carr, conducted by Jeremy Carnall. dorsetopera.com

Dumfries and Galloway International Musicians Platform

August 1-10

Concerts take place in rural Dumfries and Galloway. Guest artists include Russian cellist Karine Georgian and Scottish-born violinist Lorraine McAslan, who, along with pianists John Lenehan and John Thwaites, will perform as well as lead masterclasses (a number of which are offered free to local residents). internationalmusiciansplatform.co.uk

Edinburgh International Festival

August 8-31

The line-up includes Mariss Jansons and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, the Czech Philharmonic (Jiří Bělohlávek), the Rotterdam Philharmonic (Yannick Nézét-Séguin) and the LPO (Vladimir Jurowski). First on the bill is the RSNO under Oliver

Knussen with Schoenberg, Scriabin and Debussy. Stage works include Berlioz's Les Troyens (Mariinsky Opera), Britten's Owen Wingrave (Aldeburgh Music), a concert performance of Rossini's William Tell (Turin Opera) and Harry Partch's Japanese Noh- and Ethiopian myth-inspired Delusion and the Fury. Soloists include Paul Lewis (piano), Ian Bostridge (tenor), Simon Keenlyside (baritone) and violinists Patricia Kopatchinskaja and Nicola Benedetti. Chamber music features the Artemis. Takács and Pavel Haas quartets. There's also Hespèrion XXI with music ranging from Handel to traditional Middle Eastern sounds; Renaissance and contemporary music from the Arditti Quartet; songs of the Hui Muslims; and music from Terezín with Anne Sofie von Otter. eif.co.uk

English Music Festival

May 23-26

Little-known English works heard at Dorchester Abbey: including pieces by Vaughan Williams and Boughton. There's both familiar and less familiar music by Finzi, Butterworth, Coates, Moeran and John Pickard (*b*1963). Among the artists are clarinettist Robert Plane, violinist Rupert Marshall-Luck, the Orchestra of St Paul's and City of London Choir. englishmusicfestival.org.uk

Fishguard International Music Festival

July 19-30

The Pembrokeshire festival celebrates Welsh composer William Mathias's 80th birthday. Other highlights include a chamber version of Humperdink's *Hänsel und Gretel*; a recital by soprano Elizabeth Watts; and a visual-auditory journey, *Sketches of Mexico*, from guitarist Morgan Szymanski. Other artists include BBC NOW, Sinfonia Cymru, violinist Alissa Margulis and cellist Per Nyström. **fishguardmusicfestival.co.uk**

Garsington Opera

June 6 - July 13

To commemorate the First World War, the Wormsley Estate in the Chiltern Hills hosts a special weekend event, 'Peace in our Time?', focusing on the Beethovenian ideal of brotherhood and featuring his music for Goethe's *Egmont*, Symphony No 9 and a cello recital by Steven Isserlis. The operatic schedule launches with John Cox's production of *Fidelio*. Other operas on offer are Offenbach's *Vert-vert* and Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*. garsingtonopera.org

unusual venue... Cambo Barn, East Neuk

East Neuk Festival

June 27 - July 6

In its 10th anniversary year, Fife's musical, artistic and literary series offers 10 days of events instead of the usual five. Highlights include the Scottish premiere of James MacMillan's new piano trio; a Schubertiad weekend, and performances from guitarist Sean Shibe showcasing composers from Villa-Lobos to Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. Other artists include the Belcea Quartet, the Gould Piano Trio, soprano Malin Christensson, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and pianist and conductor Christian Zacharias. Performances take place in venues ranging from churches to a working potato barn – the latter without any inbuilt heating or insulation! eastneukfestival.com



Two concerts, including the last, are scheduled to take place in the barn this year

Glyndebourne Festival

May 17 - August 24

The festival kicks off with Richard Jones's new *Der Rosenkavalier*, conducted by music director Robin Ticciati. There are also new productions of Mozart's *La finta giardiniera* (Frederic Wake-Walker) and Verdi's *La traviata* (Tom Cairns). Revivals include Graham Vick's 1994 staging of *Eugene Onegin*, Jonathan Kent's 2010 *Don Giovanni* and Robert Carsen's 2011 *Rinaldo*. glyndebourne.com

Grange Park Opera

May 30 - July 12

First on the bill is *Peter Grimes* – directed by Jeremy Sams, conducted by Stephen Barlow. There's also Anthony McDonald's *Queen of Spades*, Lindsay Posner's *La traviata* and Charles Edwards's production of Massenet's *Don Quichotte*. grangeparkopera.co.uk

Gregynog Festival

June 13-29

Wales's oldest classical music festival takes war as its theme, drawing an arc between the English Civil War and the First World War. There are works by Gibbons, Tomkins, Lawes and Jenkins which foreshadowed the Civil War, and a programme entitled 'The Soldier - From Severn to Somme', with Butterworth's settings of A Shropshire Lad and music by

Belgian composers who came to mid-Wales as refugees in 1914. Among the artists are the Brabant Ensemble, BBC NOW and Flemish Radio Choir. gregynogfestival.org

Henley Festival

July 9-13

This Thames-bank festival blends music with comedy, art and street theatre. Artists include Dutch pianist Daria van den Bercken, the Tippett Quartet, Chinese composer and accordionist Yi Yao, string ensemble Wildflower (which crops up 'guerrilla style' at various points) and the Henley Festival Orchestra.

Holt Festival

July 19-26

This Norfolk festival combines music, drama, art, dance, comedy, cinema, children's shows, literature and street entertainment. Performers include Calefax and Orchestra of the Swan, featuring Tamsin Waley-Cohen (violin) and Huw Watkins (piano). Music includes Mendelssohn's Concerto for violin and piano, Vaughan Williams's *The Lark Ascending* and works by Watkins. holtfestival.org

Iford Arts

June 7 - August 9

Cloister concerts and jazz evenings are offered alongside operas staged





MARTIN RANDALL TRAVEL

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Petworth Festival

16 July - 2 August 2014 Box office open 30 May 01798 344576 www.petworthfestival.org.uk



Stellar classical programme includes London Conchord Ensemble, Garrick Ohlsson, lan Bostridge, Tasmin Little, Roger Vignoles, Fitzwilliam Quartet, Wiener Kammersymphonie, Nicholas Daniel

Other highlights include The Petworth Plays (world premiere), Clare Teal, Darius Brubeck, The Only Way is Downton, Pate De Fua (Mexico), SANS (UK/Finland), Oompah Brass, and Gary Williams with Harry the Piano



General Enquiries: 01798 343055



The Royal Northern Sinfonia & Miloš Karadaglić
The Sixteen -The Choral Pilgrimage
Primavera Chamber Ensemble
Reduced Shakespeare Company
English Touring Opera - The Magic Flute
Jools Holland & His Rhythm & Blues Orchestra
Dougie MacLean - Perthshire Cantata
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Box Office at 01738 621031 www.perthfestival.co.uk





in the round in the Peto Garden of Iford Manor, near Bath. Operas include Puccini's *La rondine*, Donizetti's *La fille du régiment* and Monteverdi's *The Return of Ulysses*. **ifordarts.co.uk**

King's Lynn Festival

July 13-26

Classical, choral and jazz combine with talks, exhibitions, films and fringe events in historic venues. Michael Petrov plays Elgar's Cello Concerto; there's Tchaikovsky's Serenade for Strings from the Orchestra of St John's; pianist John Lill plays Mozart and Schumann; and there are performances from the Navarra Quartet and guitarist Craig Ogden. kingslynnfestival.org.uk

Kings Place Festival

September 12-14

As well as core classical works. there's tango, folk, klezmer and jazz. Folk-influenced music by Schumann, Janáček and Bartók is played by cellist Matthew Barley. Latin American piano duo Sergio Tiempo and Karin Lechner perform belle époque and tango repertoire. Composer, arranger and viola player John Metcalfe presents minimalist works including Steve Reich's Different Trains. The Brodsky Quartet perform Borodin and Tchaikovsky, and Aurora Orchestra premiere a commission from Michael Gordon. kingsplace.co.uk

Lake District Summer Music International Festival

August 2-15

In its 30th year Cumbria's flagship festival marks several anniversaries: 100 years since the start of the First World War, Shakespeare's 450th, CPE Bach's and Gluck's 300th, Strauss's 150th and the late Sir John Tavener's 70th. Highlights include Debussy's and Ravel's responses to the war; Tavener's Song for Athene; Shakespeare settings by Quilter, Gurney and Vaughan Williams; Metamorphosen by Strauss. Okeanos perform Nicola LeFanu's Tokaido Road. The 'Quartets Plus' strand brings the Chilingirian, Fine Arts and Vogler quartets. Venues are in historic Kendal, Ambleside and Windermere. ldsm.org.uk

Lammermuir Festival

September 12-21

Artist-in-residence François Leleux (oboe) performs Strauss's Oboe Concerto to mark the composer's 150th, and there's more Strauss from the BBCSSO. Other artists include Dunedin Consort, the Heath Quartet,



Leicester International Music Festival

September 17-20

The 'Dvořák and the Bohemians' theme brings a host of Czech composers including young Lukáš Sommer (*b*1984). Artists include Guy Johnston (cello), Catherine Leonard (violin), Chen Halevi (clarinet), Martin Owen (horn) and artistic director Nicholas Daniel (oboe).

musicfestival.co.uk

Longborough Festival Opera

June 24 - July 26

Richard Studer directs *Tosca* and *The Barber of Seville*, and there's Jenny Miller's *Rinaldo*. The festival orchestra (under Anthony Negus) play works by Beethoven, Weber and Wagner. **Ifo.org.uk**

Lufthansa Festival of Baroque Music

May 16-24

In its 30th year the festival also commemorates the 300th anniversary of George I's accession, with many works by court composer Handel, including anthems sung by The Sixteen, and *Joshua* with the FestspielOrchester Göttingen. Plus there's chamber and theatre music by other Germans based in London, a double bill of funeral music by Schütz and Purcell from Vox Luminis, and concerts paying homage to CPE Bach on his 300th anniversary. **lufthansafestival.org.uk**

Mayfield Festival of Music and the Arts

May 2-11

Schoolchildren, music teachers and amateur and professional pianists are invited to take part. The occasion: an 18-hour-long performance of Satie's *Vexations*, which comprises 840 repetitions of a single theme. Other highlights at this Sussex festival include a concert of works for organ, harp, speaking and clapping by Satie, Steve Reich, Toch and Cage; and Sarah Fox singing Cole Porter songs. Artists include the Southbank Sinfonia and the Pavão Quartet. mayfieldfestival.co.uk

Mendelssohn on Mull Festival

July 6-12

With concerts from artistic director Levon Chilingirian, fellow mentors and the up-and-coming professional musicians under their guidance, this chamber music festival includes

unusual venue... University of Oxford Botanic Garden

The Schubert Project: Bringing Schubert's Vienna to Oxford October 10 - November 1

Oxford Lieder presents the UK's first complete performance of Schubert's 650 songs. Singers include Sir Thomas Allen, Ian Bostridge, Sarah Connolly, James Gilchrist, Wolfgang Holzmair, Angelika Kirschlager, Christopher Maltman, Christoph Prégardien and Birgid Steinberger. Among the pianists are Thomas Adès, Imogen Cooper and Julius Drake, with chamber performances from the OAE, the Doric Quartet and The Schubert Ensemble. There's also a series of complementary events: an exhibition of Schubert manuscripts at the Bodleian Library; music at the Ashmolean Museum; a study event at the Botanic Garden – which, founded in 1621, is the oldest in Britain – examining references to flowers in Schubert's songs; a pop-up theatre recreation of a famous Schubert gathering; and masterclasses,

talks and workshops. schubert.oxfordlieder.co.uk



Explore Schubert's relationship with flowers in this 17th-century botanic garden

Janáček from the Zelkova Quartet as well as works by Bach, Mozart, Dvořák, Shostakovich and Boccherini. mendelssohnonmull.com

Music at Paxton

July 18-27

With a Russian theme to the Scottish Borders chamber festival, artists include Adrian Brendel (cello), Mahan Esfahani (harpsichord) and Scottish Ensemble. Alina Ibragimova leads the Chiaroscuro Quartet, the Edinburgh Quartet perform with clarinettist Maximilliano Martin, and O Duo give Paxton's first ever percussion recital. There's also a new work by Alasdair Nicolson and a Baroque night.

Music in the Round - May Festival of Chamber Music

May 9-17

Ensemble 360's Sheffield festival focuses on 'Love and War', with dramatic music by Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Messiaen, Shostakovich and James MacMillan. Artists include Matthew Brook (baritone) and Anna Markland-Crookes (piano). There's viol music from Fretwork and jazz-inflected klezmer from Moishe's Bagel. musicintheround.co.uk

Newbury Spring Festival

May 10-24

Commemorating the outbreak of the First World War, the opening concert features Butterworth's *The Banks of Green Willow* and Mozart's Requiem. Later highlights include Russian music from pianist Yevgeny Sudbin; Ravel, Thomas Adès and Mozart from Aurora Orchestra; Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov from the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra; Unexpected Opera's 'operatic cabaret' *Opera Naked*; the Dante and Chilingirian quartets; and Kinsky Trio Prague.

Norfolk and Norwich Festival

May 9-25

HK Gruber's *Gloria - A Pigtale* forms one of this year's highlights. Others include Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E minor (Tasmin Little and the Philharmonia Orchestra); music by the late Sir John Tavener interspersed with Bach; and the newly commissioned *Souvenir*, performed by the Voice Project Choir, composed by Orlando Gough, Jonathan Baker, Karen Wimhurst and Jocelyn Pook. There's also pianist Louis Lortie, The Sixteen, harpist Lavina Meijer and eclectic music from Deco Ensemble.







oxfordlieder.co.uk







Lufthansa Festival of Baroque Music 2014

The Year 1714

16-24 May | St John's Smith Square



Saturday 17 May | 7.45pm

Rachel Podger & Arte dei Suonatori

'The Georgian Concert Hall' Music for strings by Handel. Vivaldi, Corelli and Geminiani



Wednesday 21 May | 7.30pm

Bach Harpsichord Concertos

Works by Johann Sebastian and his son Carl Philipp Emanuel

Pierre Hantaï · Aapo Häkkinen Helsinki Baroque Orchestra



Friday 23 May | 7.00pm

La Risonanza & Fabio Bonizzoni

María Hinojosa Montenegro soprano

Martin Oro counter-tenor

Duets by Handel, Steffani and Pepusch



Saturday 24 May | 7.00pm

Handel – Joshua

Ida Falk Winland · Renata Pokupić Kenneth Tarver · Tobias Berndt NDR Choir (Hamburg) FestspielOrchester Göttingen **Laurence Cummings**

For more Festival information: www.lufthansafestival.org.uk Online booking: www.sjss.org.uk | Box Office: 020 7222 1061

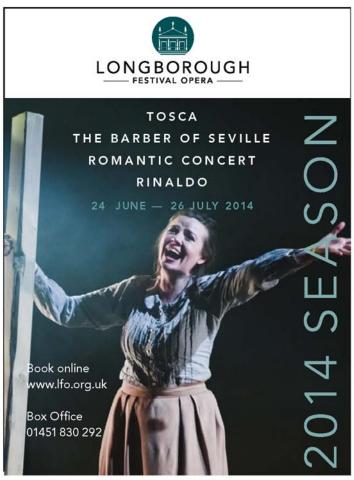
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August 13-24

Celebrating the festival's 10th year, Joan Rodgers, Gary Matthewman and Simon Rowland-Jones recreate a programme from the first year: Poulenc's Babar and Rowland-Jones's A Turn Outside. Later, John Mark Ainsley and Iain Burnside present music by First World War English composers; artists from the ROH's Jette Parker Young Artists Programme perform opera scenes; and the Carducci and Brodowski quartets play octets. Other artists include lutenist Jakob Lindberg and pianist Melvyn Tan. northnorfolkmusicfestival.com

North York Moors Chamber Music Festival

August 17-30

The chamber music festival's theme is 'Beethoven: A Legacy'. Alongside Beethoven, there's Mozart, Brahms, Schumann and Schubert, as well as Schoenberg, Zemlinsky, Janáček and Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. Concerts take place in historic churches. northyorkmoorsfestival.com

Opera Holland Park

June 3 - August 9

The London festival offers five new productions: Puccini's *La fanciulla del West*, Rossini's *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*, Bellini's *Norma* and Cilea's *Adriana Lecouvreur*. Plus Will Todd's family opera *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* returns.

operahollandpark.com

Oundle International Festival July 11-20

In the festival's 30th year, the Early Opera Company perform Handel's Acis and Galatea by the River Nene. There's also a programme entitled 'The Roaring Twenties' from Calefax and Cora Burggraaf (mezzo): Rachmaninov's Vespers from King's College Choir under David Trendell; and harpsichord music from the Hanoverian period from Robert Woolley, Other artists include the Aronovitz Ensemble, flautist Mina Middleton and horn player Emma Bain, all converging on Fotheringhay Church, Northamptonshire. oundlefestival.org.uk

Oxford May Music

April 30 - May 5

Music, science and the arts come together, with concerts preceded by lectures on psychology, astronomy and physiognomy. Highlights include Stephen Johnson's talk on bipolar affective disorder, followed by



a concert illustrating the darkness of Tolstoy's *The Kreuzer Sonata*; and musical comedy with Alfred Brendel and Rainer Hersch. Performers include artistic director Jack Liebeck, Katya Apekisheva and Trio Dali, and repertoire ranges from Haydn, Mendelssohn and Mozart to Prokofiev, Penderecki and Glass. oxfordmaymusic.co.uk

Oxford Philomusica Piano Festival

July 27 - August 4

Janina Fialkowska kicks off with Grieg, Schubert and Chopin. Other artists are Ferenc Rados, John Lill, Vadym Kholodenko, and Menahem Pressler, who performs Mozart's Concerto No 23 conducted by artistic director Marios Papadopoulos, followed by Mozart's Requiem with Echoris. Papadopoulos also leads the annual Summer Academy.

Perth Festival of the Arts

May 22 - June 1

Opening night brings English Touring Opera's staging of *The Magic Flute*. Later, Primavera perform Schubert, Grainger and Saint-Saëns; the Royal Liverpool Phil under Vasily Petrenko perform a new percussion concerto by Stewart Copeland: pianist Lucy Parham and actors Dame Harriet Walter and Henry Goodman present words and music chronicling the romantic life of Chopin; and Dougie MacLean unveils his new Perthshire Cantata. Other artists include The Sixteen, Royal Northern Sinfonia and Miloš Karadaglić. perthfestival.co.uk

Plush Festival

June 20 - September 13

Adrian Brendel's chamber festival is built around the themes of 'Love & War', 'The Third Way' and 'Ghosts in the Cafehaus' and features composers ranging from Bach, Mozart, Haydn and Schumann to Arensky, Prokofiev, Taneyev, Ligeti and Stankovski. Artists include violinists Tamsin Waley-Cohen and Thomas Gould, pianist Gwilym Simcock and guitarist Christoph Denoth.

Portsmouth Festivities

June 20-29

A celebration of music, theatre, art, dance, literature and film. The Tallis Scholars present 'War and Peace' to commemorate the First World War. There are also performances from pianist Murray McLachlan and the Young Classical Artist Trust.

portsmouthfestivities.co.uk

UNUSUAL VENUE... Arnold Circus Bandstand

Spitalfields Music Summer Festival

June 6-21

The intersection between music and other art forms is under focus this year. Among the highlights is the premiere of clarinettist and composer Arun Ghosh's Spitalfields Suite, a response to the architecture and history of the local area. Many of the other premieres, including those by James Weeks, Matthew Herbert and Bryn Harrison, contain a strong visual element. The 'Voice and the Lens' event celebrates the relationship between the voice and the camera. Further highlights include 'Death Actually' - theatrical reconstructions of Bach's motets, Schubert's Die schöne Müllerin, bawdy Baroque drinking songs and other 'alehouse' music from Barokksolistene; Opera Erratica's cross-arts staged work Triptych, which touches on feminism, pornography, loss and absurdity of language; and early music from The Sixteen, The English Concert and Gallicantus. With Spitalfields also celebrating 25 years of Learning & Participation, a key event is the London premiere of David Lang's Crowd Out for 1000 untrained voices, to be performed at Arnold Circus Bandstand - built on a mound constructed from the demolition rubble of an old East End slum. spitalfieldsfestival.org.uk



This quirky venue was built in 1910 in Bethnal Green - in the heart of east London

Presteigne Festival

August 21-26

There's a Polish flavour at the Powys-Herefordshire border this year, with music by Andrzej Panufnik, whose centenary falls this year, as well as by Penderecki, Lutosławski, Pawel Łukaszewski (b1968) and Maciej Zielinski (b1971). Other key features include a celebration of John McCabe's 75th birthday, music by Welsh composers to mark the Dylan Thomas centenary, new works by Lynne Plowman and Hilary Tann and two chamber operas: Cecilia McDowall's Airborne and Stephen McNeff's Prometheus Drowned. Artists include the Leonore Piano Trio, the Cavaleri Quartet, cellist Gemma Rosefield, soprano Rachel Nicholls and the Joyful Company of Singers. presteignefestival.com

Proms at St Jude's

June 21-29

Music and literature in Hampstead Garden Suburb, London. There's a concert performance of Puccini's *La bohème* from Nevill Holt Opera. Other highlights include a piano recital by Llŷr Williams; violinist Tasmin Little and pianist Piers Lane; the Endellion Quartet; Handel's Esther from the Elia Ensemble and Choir; and a 'Last Night of the Proms' in which Vasko Vassilev performs Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto in D. promsatstjudes.org.uk

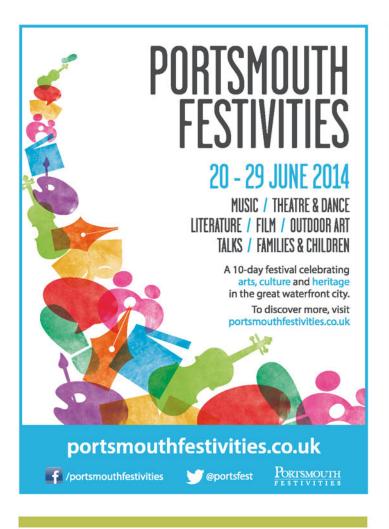
Ryedale Festival

July 11-27

This year's italianate theme brings Monteverdi's Coronation of Poppea and the Vespers of 1610, conducted by Robert Hollingworth, Italian music performed by Scottish Ensemble, Northern Sinfonia and Serenissima and a rare performance of a work by Nono evoking the sights and sounds of Venice. The First World War is commemorated with premieres including a community opera; On Memory by Michael Zev Gordon; and a work by Deborah Pritchard. Artists include oboist Nicholas Daniel, clarinettist Julian Bliss. flautist Adam Walker, bassoonist Rie Koyama and there's a residency from the Endellion Quartet. ryedalefestival.co.uk











26 JULY – 2 AUGUST 2014

Programme to include:

Bach B Minor Mass Britten War Requiem Elgar The Apostles Mahler Symphony No 2 Rasch A Foreign Field (World Premiere)

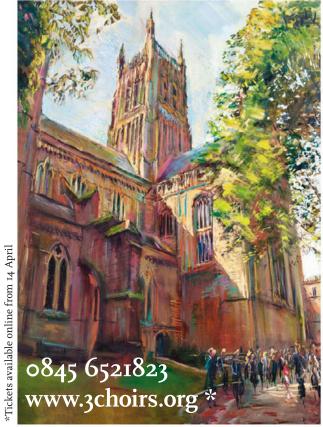
Guest artists:

Sarah Connolly Håkan Hardenberger Tenebrae The King's Singers



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St Endellion Summer Festival

July 29 - August 8

The Cornish church of St Endellion welcomes baritone Roderick Williams, soprano Sophie Bevan and conductor Ryan Wigglesworth, who all take part in Puccini's *La bohème*. The choral offering is Bach's B minor Mass. Among other attractions are Brahms's Piano Concerto No 1 played by Charles Owen; Britten's Nocturne from tenor Mark Padmore, who also sings Richard Rodney Bennett's *Tom O'Bedlam*; and Schumann's Piano Quartet featuring lain Burnside. endellionfestivals.org.uk

St Magnus International Festival June 20-26

Festival founder Sir Peter Maxwell Davies features prominently in his 80th birthday year, including a performance of his epic Westerlings. Thomas Dausgaard conducts Sergei Leiferkus and Kate Valentine in Shostakovich's Symphony No 14, oboist Nicholas Daniel performs a newly discovered Handel concerto with the Trondheim Soloists and there's a new string quartet by artistic director Alasdair Nicolson. Other themes include the 200th anniversary of the Norwegian Constitution and Orkney's cultural links with Norway, the release of Italian POWs 70 years ago, and the creation of the Italian Chapel. stmagnusfestival.com

Salisbury International Arts Festival

May 23 - June 7

Andris Nelsons conducts the CBSO in Sibelius's Violin Concerto (with Pekka Kuusisto) and Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition. There's a new production of Donizetti's Don Pasquale from the Opera Project; a choral tribute to the late Sir John Tayener from the South Iceland Chamber Choir: a new commission from Lucy Pankhurst to mark the centenary of the First World War; and a performance of early English music by Theatre of the Ayre. Novelties include a traditional Romanian troupe and a rare appearance from Norwegian composer and percussionist Terje Isungset, who performs on instruments made of ice, birch and granite. salisburyfestival.co.uk

Salisbui ylestivai.co.uk

Sherborne Abbey Festival

May 2-6

Flautist Sir James Galway is among the artists, as well as The Cardinall's Musick and the Fieri Consort, who perform English music from three centuries including Britten's *Gloriana*



Dances. Also there's a rare performance of Elgar's *The Apostles*; guitar music from Moorish Spain, Rio de Janeiro and Turkey played by Samantha Muir; and an evening of jazz from Stacey Kent. sherborneabbey.org

Southern Cathedrals Festival

July 17-20

This year's festival is at Winchester, and is built around the theme 'In War and in Peace'. The opening concert features Duruflé. In addition, Robert Quinney of Peterborough Cathedral gives an organ recital; there's a concert of works by Elgar, Byrd and Vaughan Williams; and Haydn's Nelson Mass features soprano Katharine Fuge.

Spring Sounds International Music Festival

May 16 - June 6

To commemorate the 450th anniversary of Shakespeare's birth the Orchestra of the Swan celebrate music inspired by his words at Stratford Artshouse, Stratford-upon-Avon. Howard Blake is the featured composer, with performances of his Shakespeare Songs, Variations on a Theme Composed for Henry V and Suite from As You Like It. Also on the bill are new works by Huw Watkins, Roxanna Panufnik and Guto Puw. Artists include violinist Madeleine Mitchell, soprano Ruby Hughes and baritone Jeremy Huw Williams. orchestraoftheswan.org

Swaledale Festival

May 24 - June 7

Events take place in 25 distinctive venues around the Yorkshire Dales. Artists include Royal Northern Sinfonia in an all-Bach programme; the Navarra Quartet playing Grieg, Beethoven and Britten; cellist Natalie Clein, who plays Bach, Kurtág and Kodály; oboist Nicholas Daniel; and clarinettist Emma Johnson. swalefest.org

Three Choirs Festival

July 26 - August 2

Worcester takes its turn to host one of the world's oldest choral festivals. The Philharmonia Orchestra is in residence under Juraj Valčuha, John Wilson, Nigel Short and Baldur Brönnimann. Among the works are Elgar's *The Apostles* and Mahler's Symphony No 2. Elsewhere, the Gloucester, Worcester and Hereford choirs perform Britten's *War Requiem*, Dvořák's *Stabat mater* and Bach's B minor Mass. Guest artists include baritone Roderick Williams,

UNUSUAL VENUE... Wardsbrook Tudor barn

Wardsbrook Concerts

May 18 - June 22

Founded last year by British tenor Toby Spence, his brother Magnus and the conductor Edward Gardner, this festival specialises in art song. Held in a timber-framed Tudor barn in Ticehurst, East Sussex, it offers music ranging from German Lieder and French Romanticism to American light classics. The line-up includes soprano Dame Felicity Lott, who opens the season with classic French repertoire; tenor lan Bostridge, who sings Schubert songs; soprano Christiane Karge, with a mixed programme of Schoeck, Wolf, Schoenberg, Strauss and Debussy; and baritone Gyula Orendt, performing Mahler, Schumann, Kodály and Bartók. wardsbrookconcerts.org.uk



The raw and intimate setting of a Tudor barn in the Sussex Weald

mezzo Sarah Connolly, soprano Susan Gritton and Tenebrae. **3choirs.org**

Tilford Bach Festival

June 6-8

The Surrey period-instrument festival offers Leclair and Locatelli violin concertos, flute music and arias by two Bachs and selections from Bach's B minor Mass. Artists include Dame Emma Kirkby, soprano Lizzy Cragg and violinists Elizabeth Wallfisch and festival director Adrian Butterfield. tilbach.org.uk

Ulverston International Music Festival

June 6-15

Concerts include Nicola Benedetti in Beethoven's Triple Concerto and a recital from Jack Liebeck, plus a chance to hear Doreen Carwithen's Piano Concerto, played by festival director Anthony Hewitt. ulverstonmusicfestival.co.uk

Vale of Glamorgan Festival

May 8-17

Among the highlights is BBC NOW's tribute to the late Sir John Tavener, with *The Protecting Veil* played by Guy Johnston. Chamber Choir Ireland perform Tarik O'Regan's setting of the Irish medieval MS *Acallam na Senórach*, laced with Arabian- and Persian-inflected melodies; new sounds abound in the new music mini-festival-in-a-day; Juice Vocal Ensemble present music inspired by

literature; director David Pountney gives an insight into the process of collaborating on a new opera; and the innovative Danish Ensemble MidtVest perform music ranging from Ravel to Crumb. Venues include the art deco Penarth Pier Pavilion. valeofglamorganfestival.org.uk

West Meon Music Festival

September 12-14

The Primrose Piano Quartet return to Hampshire with Brahms, Mozart and Schumann plus lesser-known fare. To commemorate the First World War anniversary each concert features a piece written during 1914-18. Other artists include double-bassist Leon Bosch and The Gadjo Club. westmeonmusic.co.uk

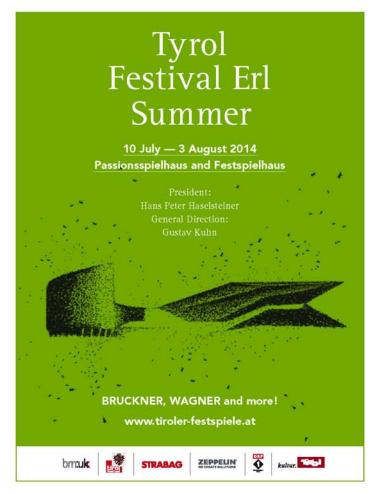
York Early Music Festival

July 10-19

Inspired by the theme 'Age of Gold, Age of Enlightenment', many works are plucked from warmer climes: Jordi Savall and Hespèrion XXI play traditional music from Armenia, Persia and Turkey; Ensemble Gilles Binchois and Les Sacqueboutiers perform some Peñalosa; The Cardinall's Musick perform Victoria and his contemporaries; and Forma Antiqua present pieces for harpsichord, guitar and theorbo from 16th- to 18th-century Italy and Spain. Other artists include The Sixteen, Yorkshire Baroque Soloists, and soprano María Cristina Kiehr. ncem.co.uk















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Programme includes:
Mendelssohn: Violin Concerto
Handel: Israel in Egypt; Purcell: Dido & Aeneas
Mozart & Dvorak: Wind Serenades
Haydn & Beethoven: String Quartets
Strauss: Metamorphosen; G & S: Patience
Prokofiev: Peter & the Wolf
plus Gershwin, Bernstein, Porter, Patterson,

www.thaxtedfestival.org.uk thaxtedfestival@btconnect.com 01371 831421

Pergolesei, Bach, Gardner, Brahms, Elgar





EUROPE festivals

Aix-en-Provence **Easter Festival**

April 14 - 27

In its second year, the festival features appearances from Daniel Harding, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Ludovic Morlot, Gustavo Dudamel, Yo-Yo Ma, Martha Argerich, Lisa Batiashvili, Mikhail Pletnev, the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra. the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra and the Radio France Philharmonic Orchestra. One strand of the season is Richard Strauss in his 150th anniversary year, with the programme boasting a selection of both his well- and lesser-known works. The associate composer is Bruno Mantovani, whose new piece is performed by violinist Renaud Capuçon.

festivalpaques.com/en

Aix-en-Provence Festival

June 7 - July 24

On the operatic calendar this year are new productions of Mozart's The Magic Flute; Handel's Ariodante directed by Richard Jones and starring mezzo Sarah Connolly; Rossini's Il turco in Italia from director Christopher Alden; a new stage adaptation of Schubert's Winterreise featuring baritone Matthias Goerne; and Trauernacht, a new staging of Bach's cantatas directed by Katie Mitchell. The concert schedule boasts performances from the Orchestre de Paris under Paavo Järvi; the World Orchestra for Peace under Valery Gergiev; pianist Alexandre Tharaud and cellist Jean-Guihen Ouevras, Repertoire, meanwhile, ranges from Bach, Handel and Rameau to Panufnik, Ligeti, Lutosławski and Kurtág, with

Romantic greats including Mahler, Richard Strauss and Wagner. festival-aix.com

Baltic Sea Festival

August 22-30

Founded in Stockholm by conductors Esa-Pekka Salonen and Valery Gergiev and general manager Michael Tydén, this festival makes a feature of original programming. Strands include music from the Baltic Sea area; and new generation musicians, such as performers from El Sistema Sweden under Gustavo Dudamel. Highlights include performances of Rimsky-Korsakov's opera Mozart and Salieri and Stravinsky's Mavra from the Mariinsky Theatre at the Drottningholm Palace Theatre. Also on the bill is the Swedish premiere of Shostakovich's little-known opera Orango, performed in concert with the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra under Salonen. Other repertoire includes symphonies by Sibelius and Stenhammar and a violin concerto by Latvian composer Pēteris Vasks.

balticseafestival.com

Beethovenfest Bonn September 6 - October 3

The festival looks at the relationship between a composition and its audience, taking as its theme 'Götterfunken' (the spark divine). Highlights include a complete Beethoven symphony cycle from the CBSO with Andris Nelsons, a residency by the Mahler Chamber Orchestra with pianist Leif Ove Andsnes, and the culmination of the three-year Borodin Ouartet residency. Other artists include the LSO with Sir John Eliot Gardiner and cellist Gautier Capuçon, the Munich Philharmonic and Lorin Maazel, Yannick Nézet-Séguin with the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra, violinst Thomas Zehetmair and trumpeter Hugh Masekela. beethovenfest.de

Bergen International Festival

May 21 - June 4

Singers from Palestine, Sri Lanka and South Africa join Nordic singers in the opening performance of the festival: a piece about liberation put together by British composer Orlando Gough. Later, Steve Reich is joined by the London Sinfonietta to perform his

Clapping Music as part of a Reich-filled concert. Pianist Leif Ove Andsnes is joined by three rising young string players in Beethoven, Brahms and Britten. And, marking the 200th anniversary of the Norwegian Constitution, comic TV presenter Linda Eide and pianist and comedian Sjur Hjeltnes give a personal account of Norwegian national history, with music ranging from Grieg to the **Eurovision Song Contest. Other** artists include Le Concert Spirituel and soprano Julia Lezhneva. fib.no

Bregenz Festival

July 23 - August 24

In his last year as artistic director, David Pountney once again brings his production of Mozart's Die Zauberflöte to the spectacular floating stage. Also on offer are two operas by HK Gruber: the premiere of Tales from the Vienna Woods. based on Ödön von Horváth's play with a libretto by Michael Sturminger, staged in the Festspielhaus; and the satirical 'cabaret opera' Gloria - A Pigtale, directed by Frederic Wake-Walker, which takes place at the Vorarlberger Landestheater. Plus, there's a double bill of family opera: Stravinsky's Le rossignol and the stage premiere of Simon Laks's L'hirondelle inattendue. The orchestral programme offers Britten, Lehár, Johann Strauss, Schmidt, Zemlinsky and more HK Gruber from the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, and the Vorarlberg Symphony Orchestra bids farewell to Pountney with a programme of Bernstein and Mozart's Der Schauspieldirektor. bregenzerfestspiele.com

Göttingen International **Handel Festival**

May 29 - June 10

The festival of lectures, operas, concerts and children's events this year takes the theme of 'Royal Handel'. Under artistic director the British conductor and harpsichordist Laurence Cummings, the programme includes the opera Faramondo, directed by Paul Curran and starring Emily Fons (mezzo). There's also a performance of Joshua, starring mezzo Renata Pokupić, as well as appearances from countertenor Robin Blaze, flautist Brian Berryman and the London Handel Players.

haendel-festspiele.de

UNUSUAL VENUE... Volkswagen Transparent Factory

Dresden Music Festival

May 23 - June 10

This year's festival explores the musical heritage of five decades: the 1620s, 1720s, 1820s, 1920s - and even the 2020s, with a futuristic event entitled 'Bohème 2020' held in the Orangery at Volkswagen's Transparent Factory, which is made of glass. Elsewhere, the singer Ute Lemper presents a programme embodying the spirit of the 1920s, ranging from Edith Piaf to Kurt Weill; Les Arts Florissants perform Monteverdi's Seventh Book of Madrigals, written on the cusp of the 1620s; Collegium Vocale Gent perform Bach's Ascension cantatas, written 1724-35; and the Dresden Festival Orchestra together with the Balthasar Neumann Chorus perform Beethoven's Missa solemnis (completed 1823). Other artists include Daniel Barenboim with the Staatskapelle Berlin in the opening concert; the Dresden Philharmonic under Michael Sanderling; baritone Matthias Goerne; Bavarian Radio forces under Sir John Eliot Gardiner; the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra under Riccardo Chailly; violinist Hilary Hahn; and organist Cameron Carpenter. musikfestspiele.com



Patricia Kopatchinskaja, 2012 - two concerts are scheduled for this venue in 2014







1

Grafenegg Festival

August 14 - September 7

Grafenegg's impressive castle and avant-garde open-air stage events welcome in several top-drawer musicians: the Czech Philharmonic under Jiří Bělohlávek with mezzo-soprano Magdalena Kožená, the Vienna Philharmonic, the London Symphony Orchestra, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and the St Petersburgh Philharmonic; the conductors Gustavo Dudamel, Sir Antonio Pappano, Andris Nelsons, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Kent Nagano, Myung-Whun Chung and Daniel Harding; the pianists Nikolai Lugansky, Emanuel Ax and Irena Gulzarova; and the festival's artistic director, the pianist Rudolf Buchbinder. The composer-inresidence is Jörg Widmann. grafenegg.com

Herrenchiemsee Festival

July 15-27

Sixty kilometres south-east of Munich lies Herreninsel Island, and Herrenchiemsee Palace, the home of this festival. This year's programme is structured around the theme 'Son et lumière' ('sound and light'), a reference to the lavish 1884 festival of King Ludwig II. On the bill are works with a strongly pictorial element, that might once have captivated the king's imagination: serenades and night music, Vivaldi's The Four Seasons. Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony, Berlioz's Harold in Italy, Schumann's Rhenish Symphony, Mendelssohn's A Midsummer Night's Dream, Matthew Locke's music for The Tempest and a semi-staged production of Beethoven's Fidelio. Artists include violinist Alexander Janiczek, pianist Christian Zacharias, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra under Joseph Swensen and Le Concert des Nations under Jordi Savall.

herrenchiemsee-festspiele.de

Incontri in Terra di Siena

July 19-27

This year the Tuscan-based chamber music festival explores the influence of master performers on their young protégés, and the productive relationship between the two.

The ensemble Soqquadro Italiano opens the programme with a history of Italian song from the 16th century to the boom of the 1960s, with instruments ranging from the Baroque guitar to the saxophone.

Other artists include the violinist Maxim Vengeroy, cellist Antonio

Lysy, pianist Saleem Aboud Ashkar, Polyphony and the Borromeo Quartet, who perform the complete string quartets by Bartók. itslafoce.org

Indian Summer in Levoča

October 10-14

Taking place in the medieval eastern Slovak town of Levoča, this festival champions music both well known and deserving to be better known, from the 18th century to the present day. This year's programme features the Vienna Piano Trio with Mozart. Brahms and Onslow; the Czech Philharmonic Quartet; and young Japanese violinist Arata Yumi, who plays Mendelssohn's early Violin Concerto in D minor with the Slovak Chamber Orchestra under Ewald Danel. As always, central European music features prominently, with works by Hummel, Fibich, Ullmann, and Janáček. CPE Bach figures in his tercentenary year, and contemporary music includes the premiere of a quartet by Steve Elcock and a work for piano and bongos by Ilja Zeljenka, featuring pianist Jordana Palovičova. Iblfestival.eu

Innsbruck Festival of Early Music

August 12-31

The motto of this year's festival is '1685', with the focus falling on the three main composers born in that year - JS Bach, Handel and Scarlatti - as well as their friends. contemporaries and relatives. Operatic highlights include Handel's Almira, Scarlatti's Narciso and Cesti's L'Orontea. Concerts. meanwhile, include performances from soprano Deborah York with Bach cantatas; violinist Amandine Beyer; the Arnold Schoenberg Choir with Bach's motets: and the choir and orchestra of Academia Montis Regalis with Bach's B minor Mass, conducted by Alessandro De Marchi. altemusik.at

Istanbul Music Festival

May 31 - June 27

'The Song of Nature' forms the theme for this year's festival, which, aptly, opens with Turkish composer Ahmet Adnan Saygun's work *A Forest Tale* performed by young cellist Dorukhan Doruk and the



UNUSUAL VENUE... Ghent's canals

Ghent Festival of Flanders

September 13-27

Classical music is combined with world music, jazz, nightlife and modern dance at this festival, which offers more than 180 concerts. The season opener is 'OdeGand', a celebration of music on and along Ghent's canals. Artists include soprano Angela Gheorghiu, Bach Collegium Japan, pianist Nicolai Lugansky and soprano Sandrine Piau. **gentfestival.be**



OdeGand 2010, displaying the historic backdrop of the beautiful city of Ghent

Borusan Istanbul Philharmonic Orchestra. Further highlights include the premiere of Alexander Raskatov's Crying in the Wilderness, and the Turkish premiere of Krzysztof Penderecki's Symphony No 2. Among the artists appearing are Penderecki, Steven Isserlis, Isabelle van Keulen, Nelson Freire. Pepe Remero, Xavier de Maistre. Yuja Wang and Julia Lezhneva as well as orchestras such as Sinfonia Varsovia and the Teresa Carreño Youth Orchestra of Venezuela. One major strand is the 'Classical Sundays' concert series, to be held in the open air. muzik.iksv.org

Itinéraire Baroque

July 24-27

Ton Koopman's early music festival returns to the leafy Périgord Vert region in the Dordogne department of south-western France. The programme begins and concludes with the Amsterdam Baroque

Orchestra, while other
performers include
Ensemble Fantasticus,
Accademia per Musica,
Ensemble Apollo,
La Gioia Armonica,
Nicolas Achten,
Gerard de Wit and Walburga
Ippenberger. At the
centre of the festival
is the 'Itinéraire'
itself, which is

a day of

concerts on a circuit of intimate parish churches.

itinerairebaroque.com

Lofoten Piano Festival

July 7-12

From now on this festival - launched in 2012 - will alternate with the Lofoten International Chamber Music Festival, which was founded 11 years ago. Among the pianists performing in Norway's beautiful Lofoten Islands this summer are Paul Lewis, Louis Lortie, Lise de la Salle, Christian Ihle Hadland and Jean-Efflam Bavouzet - the festival's artistic director. Along with solo piano music, the schedule offers piano chamber music, with an in-house chamber orchestra set up for the purpose. lofotenfestival.com

Lucerne Summer Festival

August 15 - September 14

In this first summer after the loss of its great conductor Claudio Abbado, the Lucerne Festival Orchestra launches a Brahms cycle, with a performance of the Second Symphony in the opening concert; Andriss Nelsons conducts. As a whole, however, the programme is built around the theme 'Psyche', and focuses on the power of music to move the senses. Among the artists are Cecilia Bartoli, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Maurizio Pollini, Lang Lang, Murray Perahia, Midori and Barbara Hannigan. Ensembles









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Orchestra under Daniel Barenboim,
the Chamber Orchestra of Europe
under Bernard Haitink, CBSO under
Nelsons, the Berlin Philharmonic
under Sir Simon Rattle, the Royal
Concertgebouw Orchestra under
Mariss Jansons, the Leipzig
Gewandhaus Orchestra
under Riccardo Chailly and the
Vienna Philharmonic under
Gustavo Dudamel.
Iucernefestival.ch

Moritzburg Festival

August 9-24

The chamber festival returns to rural Saxony with another impressive line-up of artists: violinist Alexander Sitkovetsky, pianists Martin Stadtfeld and Lise de la Salle, and cellists Natalie Clein, Mira Wang and the festival's artistic director Jan Vogler. Concerts take place in Moritzburg's Baroque castle, Moritzburg Church and several locations in Dresden. This year's composer-in-residence is David Philip Hefti.

Munich Opera Festival

June 21 - July 31

The National Theatre hosts operas, ballets and concerts on successive nights, while free performances take place in the Max-Joseph-Platz. Highlights include new productions of Rossini's Guillaume Tell starring Michael Volle, and Monteverdi's L'Orfeo with Christian Gerhaher. Also on the bill are stagings of Richard Strauss's Die Frau ohne Schatten, under Sebastian Weigle; Mozart's La clemenza di Tito. conducted by Adam Fischer; Verdi's La forza del destino (starring Jonas Kaufmann), Macbeth (with Anna Netrebko making her debut as Lady Macbeth) and La traviata (with Joseph Calleia). An innovation this year is the Festival in the Reithalle, an external venue, which hosts experimental music-theatre pieces, among them an evening of words, music and dance entitled Kabaret Warszawski (Warsaw Cabaret); and Boris Blacher's opera Die Flut, based on the story by Guy de Maupassant. Meanwhile, the song recital series boasts performances from Anja Harteros, René Pape and Thomas Hampson. staatsoper.de

Musique Cordiale

August 3-16

Now in its 10th year, the festival returns to the hills behind France's Côte d'Azur. One highlight is Rossini's



The Barber of Seville, directed by John Savournin and conducted by Mark Austin, Elsewhere, James Lowe conducts Haydn's symphonies, Stravinsky's Pulcinella Suite, Beethoven's Symphony No 7 and Schumann's Cello Concerto (soloist Chiara Enderle); Graham Ross conducts Bach's Mass in B minor: and there are further performances from mandolin players Simon Mayor and Hilary James; and pan pipe player Michel Tirabosco. The academy for young musicians runs alongside, with students having the opportunity to play next to a professional in one concert. musique-cordiale.com

New Ross Piano Festival

September 25-28

The small town of New Ross in south-east Ireland welcomes back this keyboard festival, hosting solo recitals, masterclasses, student sessions and pianos in supermarkets for anyone to play. Artists include Melvyn Tan, Lise de la Salle, Finghin Collins and Beatrice Berrut. As always, there is also a chamber music element and this year sees the first appearance of a wind ensemble, the Cassiopeia Quintet.

Opera Days Rotterdam

May 17-25

Verdi's Shakespearean tragedy is rethought and relocated to central Africa in the first opera of the festival. macbEth. The second offering, Arthur, is an interpretation of Purcell's opera, presented by the music-theatre ensemble De Veenfabriek. Also on the bill are Soselo in Siberia, a multimedia piece about Stalin, presented by 331/3 Collective and Rosa Ensemble; and FC Bergman's radical take on the medieval folk tale Van den vos Reynaerde, set to music by Liesa Van der Aa and the genre-crossing group Solistenensemble Kaleidoskop. operadagenrotterdam.nl

Orpheus & Bacchus Music Festival

July 5-12; September 21-26

The residential Orpheus & Bacchus Festival, which takes place at the picturesque Domaine du Faure Estate near Bordeaux in France, are offering two very different events. In July, top musicians from the University of Cambridge are performing an extensive programme of chamber music and orchestral concerts, with works ranging from Schubert's String

Quintet to Beethoven's Third and Fifth Symphonies. Then in September, the chamber festival features performances from the Gould Trio and the Wihan Quartet, with repertoire including works by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Dvořák and Janáček.

orpheusandbacchus.com Oslo Grieg Festival

May 3-11

This year's festival celebrates the 200th anniversary of the Norwegian Constitution. On the bill are two new works by Norwegian composer Cecilie Ore: Who do you think you are?, which addresses freedom of speech and verbal attacks on female journalists and is sung by soprano Eir Inderhaug; and Toil and Trouble, performed by Nordic Voices. The final concert of the Edvard Grieg **Competition for Composers** takes place in Oslo Cathedral. with premieres of new organ pieces based on music by Grieg performed by Kåre Nordstoga, Harald Herresthal and Ole Andreas Fevang. Oslo Cathedral Choir also perform Grieg's Four Psalms, a work finished by the composer during one of his many stays in Oslo. Other artists include the festival's artistic director, pianist Einar Steen-Nøkleberg. violinist Geir Inge Lotsberg, and the singers Nina Gravrok and Yngve Søberg. oslogriegfestival.no

Prague Spring Festival

May 12 - June 3

As usual, the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra launches the programme with the traditional performance of Smetana's Má vlast under its chief conductor, Jiří Bělohlávek. Other artists include violinist Gidon Kremer, the Mahler Chamber Orchestra, with pianist and conductor Leif Ove Andsnes, cellist Mischa Maisky, the Prague Philharmonia under Jakub Hrůša, the Pavel Haas Quartet, the Wihan Quartet, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra under Christoph Eschenbach. pianist Lang Lang and Les Arts Florissants. The festival closes with the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra under Paavo Järvi. performing Dvořák's Symphony No 8 and Brahms's Violin Concerto in D, with soloist Hilary Hahn. There is also a special pre-festival concert on March 24, featuring the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra and violinist Julia Fischer, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas. festival.cz

Progetto Martha Argerich - Lugano Festival

June 10-30

Based in the Italian-speaking region of Switzerland, this festival unites the great pianist Martha Argerich with about 50 artists in duos and chamber groups and with the Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana. This year's performers include pianists Stephen Kovacevich, Lilya Zilberstein, Gabriela Montero, Nicholas Angelich, Khatia Buniatishvili, Polina Leschenko, Alexander Mogilevsky and Francesco Piemontesi; violinists Gidon Kremer, Renaud Capuçon, Julian Rachlin, Andrey Baranov and Dora Schwarzberg; and cellists Mischa Maisky, Gautier Capuçon and the young French talent Edgar Moreau. One highlight is an evening dedicated to the 150th anniversary of Richard Strauss's birth. It includes a performance of the composer's Enoch Arden, a melodrama for narrator and piano. rsi.ch/argerich

Reykjavik Arts Festival

May 22 - June 5

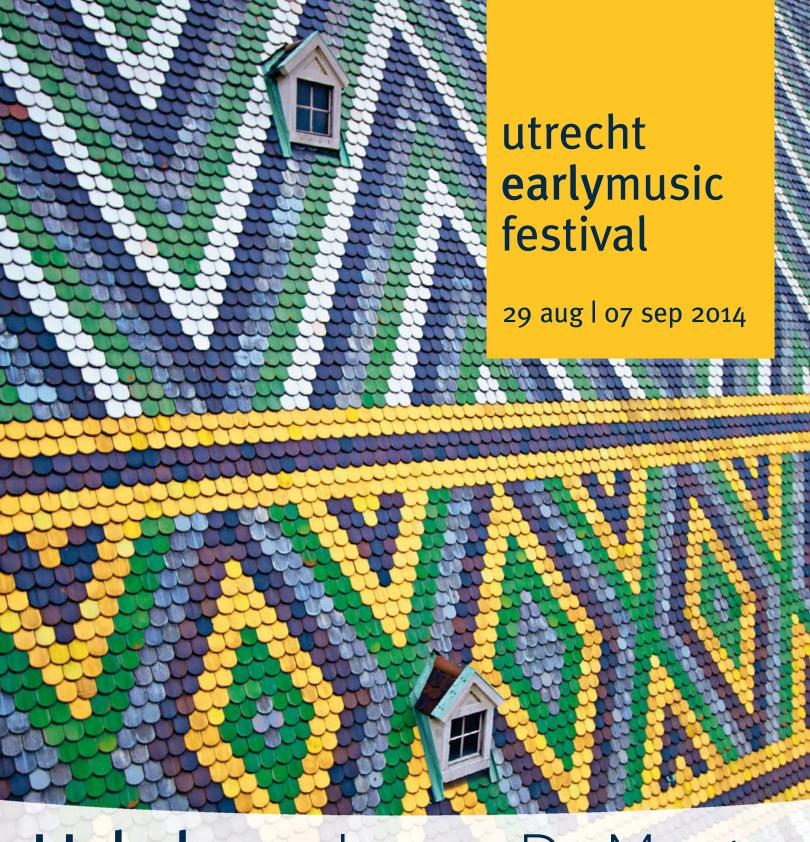
This wide-ranging multidisciplinary event focuses especially on new commissions and makes use of major cultural venues around the city as well as unconventional spaces with the aim of reaching a diverse audience. Among contemporary offerings are a performance of music by Icelandic composer Anna Thorvaldsdottir by New York's International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE); the Reykjavík Chamber Orchestra's 40thanniversary concert featuring Schoenberg's Pierrot Lunaire plus a new piece by Atli Heimir Sveinsson; and works by the late Sir John Tavener performed by South Iceland Chamber Choir, Flsewhere. Baroque ensemble Nordic Affect mix the avant-garde with 17thand 18th-century music, and more conventional fare includes Khatia Buniatishvili performing well-known piano works by Brahms, Ravel, Chopin and Stravinsky; Beethoven's complete works for cello and piano; Mahler's Third Symphony conducted by Osmo Vänskä; and mezzo Jamie Barton performing with Vox Feminae and the Reykjavík Girls' Choir. listahatid.is

Rheingau Musik Festival

June 28 - September 13

The vast German festival returns to the region between Wiesbaden and Lorch, with an emphasis on several anniversaries: Shakespeare's 450th,





Habsburg Isaac - De Monte Bertali - Biber - Fux

from 29 August to 7 September | Information & Tickets: www.oudemuziek.nl



Strauss's 150th and CPE Bach's 300th. The opening concerts feature the HR-Sinfonieorchester in music by Mendelssohn. Further highlights include two 'Bach Piano Nights' from David Fray and Pierre-Laurent Aimard; concerts of Strauss songs, orchestral works and chamber music; and performances of Schubert's Mass in E flat and Bach's St John Passion. Other artists include cellist Gautier Capuçon, pianists Maurizio Pollini, Yuja Wang, Gerold Huber and the Labèque sisters, violinist Julia Fischer, the Tonhalle-Orchester Zurich under David Zinman, pianist Igor Levit, baritone Christian Gerhaher and soprano Diana Damrau. rheingau-musik-festival.de

Salzburg Festival

July 18 - August 31

In Mozart's birthplace this season there are performances of Don Giovanni, with Luca Pisaroni and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Christoph Eschenbach; and Die Entführung aus dem Serail arranged for children by Alexander Krampe and conducted by Kai Röhrig. Other operas include Strauss's Der Rosenkavalier, starring Krassimira Stoyanova and Sophie Koch, conducted by Franz Welser-Möst: Verdi's II trovatore. with Anna Netrebko and Plácido Domingo, conducted by Daniele Gatti; Schubert's Fierrabras starring Dorothea Röschmann and conducted by Ingo Metzmacher; Donizetti's La favorita with Juan Diego Flórez; and Rossini's La Cenerentola with Cecilia Bartoli. Concerts include a complete Bruckner symphony cycle performed by various orchestras; and performances from the Berlin Philharmonic under Sir Simon Rattle, the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra under Daniel Barenboim and the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra under Mariss Jansons. Recitalists include Anne-Sophie Mutter, Maurizio Pollini, Evgeny Kissin, Pierre-Laurent Aimard and Anna Prohaska. salzburgerfestspiele.at

Savonlinna Opera Festival

July 4 - August 2

The new production this season is Aulis Sallinen's Kullervo from director Kari Heiskanen, conducted by Hannu Lintu. The other operas on the bill are revivals of Puccini's Madama Butterfly, conducted by Jan Latham-Koenig, Bizet's Carmen, conducted by Frédérick Chaslin, August Everding's staging of Mozart's The Magic Flute; and Welsh



National Opera productions of Verdi's Nabucco and Puccini's Manon Lescaut. There's also a performance of Mozart's Requiem, featuring soprano Soile Isokoski. operafestival.fi

Schubertiade Schwarzenberg

June 21-29; August 23-31

Schubert's works are the inspiration behind this Austrian festival of song and chamber music, held in the Bregenz forest region. On the bill this year are the Ebène, Artemis, Pavel Haas, Belcea and Julia Fischer quartets, Christoph Prégardien, Renaud Capuçon, Gerald Finley, Julius Drake, Sylvia Schwartz, Malcolm Martineau, András Schiff, Marc-André Hamelin, Mark Padmore, Kristian Bezuidenhout, Anna Prohaska, Luca Pisaroni, Angelika Kirchschlager, Elisabeth Leonskaja, Pavol Breslik, Soile Isokoski, Ian Bostridge, Baiba Skride and Sol Gabetta. Alongside Schubert, repertoire includes works by Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Strauss, Wagner, Arenski, Shostakovich, Liszt, Dvořák, Janáček, Ravel and Bernstein. www.schubertiade.at

Stresa Festival

July 24 - September 6

This festival, in its beautiful Lake Maggiore setting, is divided into three parts: 'Midsummer Jazz Concerts', 'Musical Meditations' and, the main core of the festival, 'Music on the Move'. Among the standout events are a complete cycle of Bach's cello suites from Johannes Moser and a Beethoven piano sonata cycle from Paul Lewis and Igor Levit. Other performers include the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Vladimir Jurowski, cellist Truls Mørk, the Gustav Mahler Jugendorchester, conductor Christoph Eschenbach, pianist Tzimon Barto and the festival's artistic director, conductor Gianandrea Noseda. stresafestival.eu

Trasimeno Music Festival

July 4-11

Celebrating its 10th birthday this year, pianist Angela Hewitt's festival returns to Lake Trasimeno with a line-up including soprano Lydia Teuscher, the Cremona Quartet, Camerata Salzburg, soprano Dame Felicity Lott and Aurora Orchestra soloists. Among the highlights are Mozart's Coronation Mass performed by the Milan Giuseppe Verdi Symphony Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Jeffrey Tate;

UNUSUAL VENUE... Verona Arena

Verona Arena Opera Festival

June 20 - September 7

The historic city's spectacular arena offers six productions in the festival's 101st year: Verdi's Un ballo in maschera and Aida; Bizet's Carmen; Puccini's Turandot and Madama Butterfly; and Gounod's Roméo et Juliette. Plus, don't miss Plácido Domingo performing a Verdi programme. arena.it



The impressive first-century Roman amphitheatre during last year's festival

a performance of Walton's Façade; and a recital of Bach's Goldberg Variations by Hewitt. Concerts take place in the Castle of the Knights of Malta, Magione, and venues in Assisi, Perugia and Foligno.

trasimenomusicfestival.com

Verbier Festival

July 18 - August 3

Four operatic events are scheduled for this year's festival, which makes its annual return to the Swiss Alps: Berlioz's La damnation de Faust, featuring Ramón Vargas; Beethoven's Fidelio; a Puccini/Verdi evening combining II tabarro with Acts 3 and 4 of Don Carlo starring Vittorio Grigolo; and Mozart's Il re pastore, with Rolando Villazón. Artists include Thomas Hampson, Daniil Trifonov, Evgeny Kissin, Stephen Kovacevich, Mikhail Pletnev. the Jerusalem Quartet, Joshua Bell and Steven Isserlis. Meanwhile, the in-house training programmes run alongside, including the Verbier Festival Academy. the Verbier Festival Orchestra under music director Charles Dutoit and the Verbier Festival Music Camp. verbierfestival.com

West Cork Chamber Music Festival

June 27 - July 5

The town of Bantry in South West Ireland plays host to an intimate, select group of artists during this annual chamber music festival. The Doric Quartet perform Janáček's Kreutzer Sonata; the Vanbrugh

Quartet play Debussy's String Quartet; baritone Philippe Sly and pianist Julius Drake perform two great song-cycles, Mahler's Rückert-Lieder and Schumann's Dichterliebe; the Zemlinsky Quartet play Mendelssohn's Quartet in F minor, Op 80; violinist Alina Ibragimova, cellist Alban Gerhardt and pianist Philippe Cassard perform Ravel's Piano Trio; the Danish Quartet perform Zarebski's Piano Quintet in G minor, Op 34, with Philippe Cassard; violinist Carolin Widmann plays Bartók's Solo Violin Sonata; soprano Ailish Tynan gives a recital of Copland, Barber, Pendleton and Moeran; and viola player Lawrence Power performs Brahms sonatas. Concerts take place at Bantry House and at St Brendan's Church, and the annual programme of masterclasses and the literary festival run alongside. westcorkmusic.ie

Zeist Music Days

August 16 - 30

Returning to the town of Zeist in the central Netherlands, this chamber music festival celebrates its 25th anniversary. Performing artists featured this year include the Artemis, Borodin, Jerusalem and Pavel Haas quartets, the mezzosoprano Christianne Stotijn, clarinettist Sharon Kam and cellist Gary Hoffman. The regular series of masterclasses for young ensembles runs alongside, followed by a student concert tour.

zeistermuziekdagen.nl



NORTH AMERICA festivals

Aspen Music Festival and School

June 26 - August 17

Held in the Colorado mountains, this festival opens with Robert McDuffie playing Philip Glass's Violin Concerto No 2 (American Four Seasons). Further highlights include Bruch's Violin Concerto No 1 from Joshua Bell: Nielsen's Symphony No 1 with the Aspen Chamber Symphony under Osmo Vänska; Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto from Midori; excerpts from Mussorgsky's Boris Godunov with bass-baritone Eric Owens; and Lowell Liebermann's opera The Picture of Dorian Gray. Other artists include cellist Alisa Weilerstein. pianist Jeremy Denk and the Emerson Quartet. The festival closes with Beethoven's Choral Symphony. aspenmusicfestival.com

Blossom Music Festival

July 3 - August 30

The Cleveland Orchestra are back at Ohio's Blossom Music Center.
'A Salute to America' marks Independence Day with American favourites by Gershwin and Sousa, topped off with the 1812 Overture and a fireworks display. Later, Isabelle Faust plays Sibelius's Violin Concerto; Bramwell Tovey conducts Bizet and Falla; Yo-Yo Ma plays Elgar; Stephen

Bard Summerscape

June 27 - August 17

unusual venue... Fischer Center Spiegeltent

The life of Schubert and his cultural milieu is explored here in Hudson Valley,

played. Plus, there's a re-creation of the one concert that he devoted entirely

alongside later orchestrations of his music by Liszt, Brahms and Berlioz; and

works by contemporaries such as Schuppanzigh and Diabelli. Also featured

Weber's gothic opera Euryanthe; and a return of cabaret in the Spiegeltent

- an old-world kitschy 'tent of mirrors' imported from Belgium, lined with

Roll up, roll up: audiences revel in the unique atmosphere of the Spiegeltent

lush velvet canopies. fishercenter.bard.edu

NY; many of the composer's instrumental, chamber and vocal works are

to his own music; his opera Fierrabras; his symphonic and choral works

are talks and discussions about the composer. The season also includes

Hough performs Liszt's First Piano Concerto; and Franz Welser-Möst conducts Brahms's Third and Fourth Symphonies in one concert. Other featured artists are Renaud Capuçon, Benjamin Grosvenor, Francesco Piemontesi and John Storgårds. clevelandorchestra.com

Bravo! Vail

June 27 - August 2

Three orchestras are featured this year in Colorado's Rocky Mountains: Dallas Symphony Orchestra under Jaap van Zweden, Philadelphia Orchestra (Yannick Nézet-Séguin) and the New York Philharmonic (Alan Gilbert). Among the soloists joining them are violinist Midori and pianists Yefim Bronfman and Hélène Grimaud. Repertoire includes Beethoven's Symphony No 9; Ravel's Boléro; Tchaikovsky's Symphony No 4 and the Romeo and Juliet Overture: and Rachmaninov's Symphonic Dances. bravovail.org

Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music

August 1-10

Led by Marin Alsop, the festival of orchestral music features works by composers including Dylan Mattingly, Bela Fleck, Andrew Norman, TJ Cole, Jennifer Higdon, Mark Anthony Turnage, Jonathan Sheffer, Gabriella Smith, John Adams, Brett Dean, Stacy Garrop, Clarice Assad, Michael Daugherty and Detlev Glanert. cabrillomusic.org

Caramoor Summer Music Festival

June 21 - August 6

At this year's festival in Westchester County, NY, the artists include violinist Joshua Bell, the Dover Quartet and cellist Alisa Weilerstein. The Bel Canto opera series, led by Will Crutchfield, features Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* with soprano Angela Meade, and Verdi's *Rigoletto* with baritone Stephen Powell and soprano Georgia Jarman. The Orchestra of St Luke's return under Cristian Măcelaru, with Bizet's Symphony in C, Shostakovich's Chamber Symphony and Copland's *Appalachian Spring*. caramoor.org

Carmel Bach Festival

July 19 - August 2

Connections between Bach and Italian music are the focus this year. The opening concert pitches Bach's Magnificat in D against Vivaldi's Gloria. Another explores Italian opera, with excerpts from Monteverdi's L'incoronatione di Poppea and Puccini's Gianni Schicchi. 'Mandolin Magic' offers Bach and Vivaldi transcribed for two mandolins, alongside Bulgarian music, bluegrass, 'American bend' duets and a Brazilian choro piece. Soloists include Dominique Labelle, Aaron Sheehan, Rufus Müller and Robin Blaze. bachfestival.org

Festival del Sole

July 11-2

This festival takes place in California's Napa Valley and offers concerts, art exhibits, wine and fine dining. Artists include the Sphinx Symphony Orchestra (the only all-Black and Latino orchestra in the world), who'll be in residence under Pinchas Zukerman; and violinist Joshua Bell, who performs on opening night. festivaldelsole.org

Glimmerglass Festival

July 11 - August 24

The lakeside opera festival in Otsego County, NY, presents three productions: Puccini's Madama Butterfly,

Strauss's *Ariadne in Naxos*, and, to celebrate Tobias Picker's 60th birthday, a newly revised *An American Tragedy*, based on Theodore Dreiser's novel. Plus, there's a performance by artist-in-residence soprano Christine Goerke, as well as masterclasses with Jessye Norman and director Jonathan Miller, and an evening of *bel canto* from members of the Young Artists Program.

Grand Teton Music Festival

July 3 - August 16

This year in Jackson, Wyoming, players from the finest US orchestras come together as the Grand Teton Music Festival Orchestra under music director Donald Runnicles, with soloists Jonathan Biss (Beethoven's Piano Concerto No 4), Sarah Chang (Barber's Violin Concerto), soprano Heidi Melton (Moonlight Interlude from Strauss's Capriccio) and Colin Currie (Kalevi Aho's percussion concerto Sieidi). Other highlights include performances of Rachmaninov's Symphonic Dances and Mahler's Symphony No 5. gtmf.org

June in Buffalo

June 2-8

This festival and conference held at the University of Buffalo is dedicated to new composers. Ensembles include the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Court Circuit, Ensemble Signal, Norrbotten Neo and Slee Sinfonietta, joined by special guests Irvine Arditti, Nicholas Isherwood and Brad Lubman. This year's senior composers are David Felder, Joshua Fineberg, Stephen Hartke, Philippe Hurel, Hilda Paredes and Bernard Rands. music21c.org

Lincoln Center Festival

July 7 - August 16

For the first time the festival features the combined forces of the Bolshoi Ballet, Opera, Orchestra and Chorus, whose programmes include a concert performance of Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tsar's Bride*.

Violinist Joshua Bell opens this year's Festival del Sole







July 24 to August 3

estival

DE QUÉBEC

«Although the Quebec Opera Festival is only in its third season, it has already established itself in the North American summer opera circuit with cutting-edge productions and world class execution.» Karyl Charna Lynn, Opera Now, Fall 2013 Artistic Director and General Manager Grégoire Legendre

It's a rendez-vous!

www.festivaloperaquebec.com









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ASPEN MUSIC FESTIVAL AND SCHOOL

June 26 to August 17, 2014



There's also the New York premiere of Houston Grand Opera's production of Weinberg's 1968 opera about the Holocaust, *The Passenger*, directed by David Pountney and conducted by Patrick Summers. Chamber concerts featuring Weinberg's pieces precede each performance of the opera. Plus, the Brussels-based dance company Rosas presents works set to music by Steve Reich and Bartók. **lincolncenterfestival.org**

Marlboro Music

July 19 - August 17

This musical retreat in rural Vermont provides a setting for young professionals to collaborate with musical mentors. Under the guidance of artistic director Mitsuko Uchida and others, participants exchange ideas and rehearse chamber works before performing a selection in weekend concerts for the public. marlboromusic.org

Mostly Mozart Festival

July 25 - August 23

Lincoln Center's festival pairs Mozart with composers from Handel to Shostakovich. Central to the event is the Mostly Mozart Festival Orchestra led by music director Louis Langrée. There's also chamber music, contemporary music and a series of late-night recitals with wine. mostlymozart.org

Music@Menlo

July 18 - August 9

The 12th Music@Menlo returns to the San Francisco Bay area and revolves around Dvořák through concerts, lectures and discussions. Performers include the Danish and Escher Quartets, violinist Alexander Sitkovetsky and the festival's founding artistic directors: cellist David Finckel and pianist Wu Han. Amongst the rarities is a Zemlinsky quartet cycle.

Ravinia Festival

June 5 - September 6

Key events behind the Chicago SO's festival include a concert performance of Richard Strauss's Salome, with Patricia Racette in the title role; and productions of Mozart's Don Giovanni and Le nozze di Figaro. The Chicago Pavilion, meanwhile, boasts performances of Stravinsky, Chopin and Dvořák under Krzysztof Urbański; Tchaikovsky and Prokofiev under Susanna Mälkki, with violinist Midori: and Bernstein's West Side Story, alongside a screening of the film. There's also an all-Brahms programme from the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen under Paavo Järvi. Other performers include Yo-Yo Ma, Dawn Upshaw, Kiri Te Kanawa, Deborah Voigt and the Takács, Orion and Juilliard Quartets. ravinia.org

San Francisco Opera

June 11 - July 13

Heading the programme is John Copley's production of Verdi's *La traviata*. The other offering is Jun Kaneko's production of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* with Patricia Racette.

sfopera.com

unusual venue... West Branch Gallery & Sculpture Park

Green Mountain Opera Festival

May 26 - June 22

In Vermont's Mad River Valley, the festival features productions of Rossini's *La Cenerentola* and Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*. The Emerging Artist Program runs alongside, as well as a series of open rehearsals, masterclasses and concerts. Opera at the Gallery, an art and song festival-fundraiser on May 30, is held at the West Branch Gallery & Sculpture Park, a unique indoor/outdoor art space located beside the West Branch of the Little River in Stowe. **greenmountainoperafestival.com**



Some of the contemporary works to be seen in the tranquil Sculpture Park

UNUSUAL VENUE... Meditation Mount, Ojai

Ojai Music Festival

June 12-15

Pianist Jeremy Denk directs a festival of 'music about music'. One highlight is the premiere of Steven Stucky's comic opera *The Classical Style*, based on Charles Rosen's book, with a libretto by Denk. Other repertoire includes Uri Caine's Mahler adaptations; Timo Andres's reimagining of Mozart's *Coronation* Concerto; and the premiere of a new piano piece by Andrew Norman. There's also music by Janáček, Ives, Feldman, Ligeti and Weill, as well as Beethoven and Haydn. For something different, a Sunrise Concert, 'Hymnfest', is performed by the Ojai Festival Singers at the breathtakingly beautiful Meditation Mount. ojaifestival.org



Meditation Mount: a 'little piece of heaven' looking down on the Ojai Valley

Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival

July 20 - August 25

Repertoire ranges from Mozart to
Julian Anderson at the 42nd Santa Fe
Chamber Music season. Among the
highlights are a performance of
Schubert, Beethoven and a world
premiere by Brett Dean from the
Orion Quartet; an evening of new
works from the Flux Quartet; Kurtág,
Webern and Brahms from the
Johannes Quartet; and a piano
recital series featuring Yefim
Bronfman, Joseph Kalichstein and
Alessio Bax, among others.
santafechambermusic.com

Santa Fe Opera

June 27 - August 23

Five operas this summer: Bizet's Carmen, in which Daniela Mack and Ana María Martínez share the title role; Laurent Pelly's new production of Donizetti's Don Pasquale, featuring the tenor Alek Shrader and soprano Laura Tatulescu; Beethoven's Fidelio with Alex Penda and Paul Groves; a double-bill of Mozart's The Impresario and Stravinsky's Le rossignol; and the American première of Dr Sun Yat-sen, composer Huang Ruo's opera about the epic struggle to overthrow China's ancient monarchy. santafeopera.org

Spoleto Festival USA

May 23 - June 8

Music, dance and theatre converge at this festival, based in Charleston, South Carolina. This year's operas include John Adams's El Niño, Janáček's Kát'a Kabanová and the American première of Michael Nyman's sci-fi-esque Facing Goya. Other highlights include a performance of Britten, Honegger and Glass from by the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra under Aik Khai Pung; an appearance from the Westminster Choir with music from Brahms to the Latvian composer Eriks Ešenvalds; and the return of the Bank of America chamber music series. In addition, the Music In Time series features works ranging from John Luther Adams's Four Thousand Holes to Andriessen's Perseverance. spoletousa.org

Tanglewood

June 27 - August 30

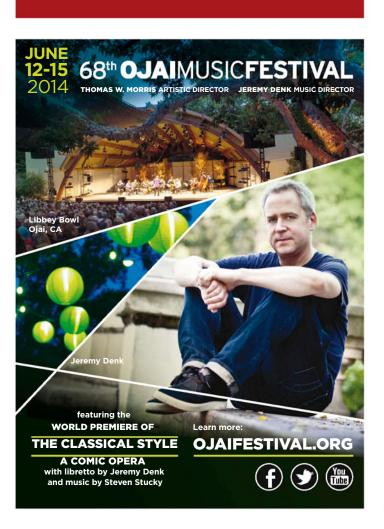
Renée Fleming opens the Boston SO's season at Tanglewood with an all-American programme. Further key events include Dvořák's Violin Concerto from Anne-Sophie Mutter and conducted by Andris Nelsons; a performance from the baritone Thomas Hampson celebrating Richard Strauss's birth; a performance of Mahler's Resurrection Symphony, conducted by Christoph von Dohnányi; a concert performance of Bernstein's Candide under Bramwell Tovey; and a concert to celebrate conductor Leonard Slatkin's 70th birthday. tanglewood.org

The Summer Festivals Guide 2014 was compiled by Hannah Nepil

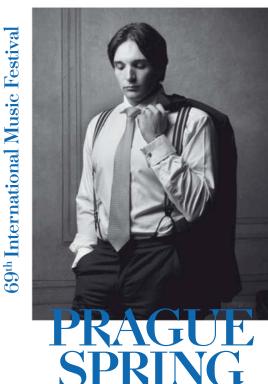












Wiener Philharmoniker
Daniil Trifonov
Andreas Scholl
Les Arts Florissants
Lang Lang
Jiří Bělohlávek
Christoph Eschenbach
Julia Fischer
Hilary Hahn
Freiburger Barockorchester
Gidon Kremer
Jonathan Nott
Violeta Urmana
Adam Plachetka
Czech Chamber Music Weekend

Tickets on line at www.festival.cz











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GRAMOPHONEReviews

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- ② Compact disc (number of discs in set)
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- s subtitles included
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(In box-sets, price is per disc)



Editor's Choice

Martin Cullingford's pick of the finest recordings reviewed in this issue



Critic's Choice

Awarded by a reviewer to a recording which has proved distinctly rewarding



Gramophone Player

Hear a high-quality sample of the music online

Recording of the Month

Jeremy Nicholas proclaims a new benchmark recording of Tchaikovsky's first two piano concertos



Tchaikovsky

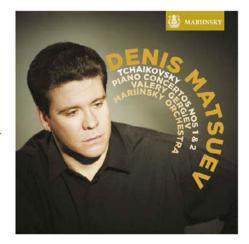
Piano Concertos - No 1, Op 23; No 2, Op 44 **Denis Matsuev** *pf*

Mariinsky Orchestra / Valery Gergiev
Mariinsky (F) MARO548 (79' • DDD)

The B flat minor Concerto has been recorded so many times that you may justifiably ask if we really need another. For an answer, listen to this newcomer. There have been many very great accounts of it – Horowitz / Szell, Argerich / Abbado, Gilels / Mehta among them – but I doubt if you will ever hear it more viscerally thrilling and sumptuously engineered than here. Listening to Matsuev and Gergiev is the aural equivalent of watching Federer and Nadal, friends off the tennis court but ultracompetitive on it, each determined to outdo the other with supreme athleticism

After a conventional enough introduction, you start to notice deft little touches, such as the weight Matsuev gives to his attack at the top of the keyboard or the darting semiquaver runs at 5'23", which he plays *leggiero* and with no pedal. Neither protagonist is anxious to linger sentimentally along the way and Gergiev, sometimes routine in concerto recordings, is here fiercely energised – giving as good as he gets, as it were, from his soloist – to the point after the orchestral *tutti* at 10'55" that you wonder how Matsuev is going to

and an arsenal of exquisite passing shots.



'Hearing Matsuev and Gergiev is the aural equivalent of watching Federer and Nadal, each trying to outdo the other'

match him. But of course he does, and to hair-raising effect.

In the slow movement, the woodwind-writing and the piano's *sempre staccato* passage over the cello solo at 2'02" are beautifully captured. The *scherzo*, again played with minimum pedal and maximum clarity, almost makes one gasp, Matsuev's wonderful, gossamer-like touch bringing an unusual playfulness to proceedings. His *martellato* delivery of some passages throughout this muscular, virile performance sometimes risks going through the tone, and some may find his approach too relentless. Personally, it doesn't bother me: there is a sense of occasion and a burning purpose here that

is missing from so many recordings of this work and which merely adds to the excitement of a conception that builds so inexorably to the work's peroration that I guarantee, no matter how familiar you are with the concerto, it will make your eyes burn. If this isn't the greatest performance on disc, it is certainly now my personal benchmark.

Equally impressive readings of both Opp 23 and 44 on a single disc are as rare as hen's teeth but that's what we have here, for Matsuev and Gergiev give a similarly blistering account of the G major Concerto. Of other one-disc pairings, Moiseiwitsch and George Weldon (APR, 3/97) are hors de combat sonically and, in Op 44, musically: Siloti's edition, with its 'authentic' rewrites and brutal cuts, so long de rigeur, is thankfully no longer in favour as it was in 1944 (and would remain for many years to come); worst affected is the 'triple concerto' second movement, with its extended passages for solo violin and cello reduced by Siloti from 332 bars to 141. Sadly, Cherkassy (DG, 7/99, with two different conductors), in what are otherwise treasurable accounts, also suffers from this cut. On two-disc sets, Gary Graffman and George Szell's (Sony, 1/06) thrilling first and third movements are compromised by a Siloti second movement; Peter Donohoe and Rudolf Barshai (EMI, 2/91), one of the first recordings to eschew Siloti, is short on adrenaline but features the young Nigel

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Puckish and playful: Denis Matsuev revels in Tchaikovsky's First and Second Piano Concertos; he meets his match with a similarly energised Valery Gergiev

Kennedy and Steven Isserlis; Oleg Marshev and Owain Arwel Hughes (Danacord, A/07) offer Tchaikovsky's original but are lumbered with two deeply ordinary soloists; Stephen Hough and Osmo Vänskä's live recording (Hyperion, 5/10) suffers from less than ideal sound and I'm not convinced by Hough's headlong sprint in the finale after the fermata at bar 483.

So what makes the Matsuev / Gergiev account of the Second Concerto so special? The first movement, with its pages of bravura octaves and physically taxing solo passages, can often sound laborious for the soloist and laboured for the listener. Matsuev revels unapologetically in the display while artfully avoiding mere bombast and providing a nuanced,

Listening points Your guide to the disc's memorable moments

Track 1: Piano Concerto No 1, 1st movt

The *tutti* passage beginning at 9'54" offers the soloist a rare moment of respite. Gergiev racks up the tension over the next 54 bars. Matsuev returns to the battle at 10"55" like a greyhound out of a trap.

Track 2: Piano Concerto No 1, 2nd movt

Listen to the solo cello's eloquent take on the main theme (2'02") and the piano's *sempre staccato* accompanying chords which, in Matsuev's hands, chug along fraternally, underpinned by an unusually deft use of the left hand's off-beats.

Track 5: Piano Concerto No 2, 2nd movt

In the unlikely event of the First Concerto leaving you with the impression that Matsuev is not a lyricist or colourist, listen to the passage from 4'05" to 5'12". This is the playing of a great musician.

Track 6: Piano Concerto No 2, 3rd movt

Superb engineering and rhythmic precision ensure that the well-oiled machinery of the finale bowls along with exemplary clarity and panache.

coherent shape to the whole, not without moments of puckish humour (un poco capriccioso says the score at 8'01") and expressive elegance (11'37"). In the bedevilled Andante non troppo movement I should mention in particular the mellifluous violin and cello soloists (uncredited in the booklet), though the former is a noticeably heavy breather. Tchaikovsky's sublime melody is played by them heart-on-sleeve, with Matsuev, when he takes up the theme, underlining its elegiac quality with exquisite tenderness. Matsuev and Gergiev opt for the second of the composer's two versions of the ending, cutting (the redundant, in my opinion) bars 310-26 and coming in again seven bars before the end. The finale is a riot as it should be and, with scintillating energy, brings to a conclusion this must-have release. Two five-star recordings, so to speak, on one disc. 6



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Orchestral



David Gutman reviews Haitink's live Bruckner Ninth with the LSO:

'You won't quickly forget those stern, unyielding climaxes underpinned by black, cadaverous timps' > REVIEW ON PAGE 60



Rob Cowan listens to pickings from the 1962 Salzburg Festival:

'Its devotional spirit and chamber-like intimacy is quite unlike any other version available' > REVIEW ON PAGE 71

Aho

Double Bass Concerto^a.

Symphony No 15^b. Minea^c

^aEero Munter db

Lahti Symphony Orchestra / ^aJaakko Kuusisto;

^bDima Slobodeniouk; ^cOsmo Vänskä

BIS (E)

BIS1866 (78' • DDD/DSD)



This recording of Aho's 15th, and I think still latest, Symphony has been a while

coming – the concert premiere, an unforgettable event, was with the BBC Philharmonic in Manchester in March 2011. But it's worth the wait. The symphony's co-commissioners in Lahti, with a long track record in Aho performances, are every bit as dedicated and deft under the Moscow-born, Finnish-resident conductor Dima Slobodeniouk.

As with much of Aho's music since 2000, the DSCH motif looms large. However, Aho mentions no special tribute and is cagey about any roots his music may have in Shostakovich. His expressed concern is with the contrast between mysterious spaces and wild dancing, the ultimate dominance of the latter leading him to suggest that the piece might be regarded as his 'apotheosis of the dance'. In some ways the contrasts come across as wider even than that. Both the opening movement (headed 'Mists'), with its dense carpet of strings, and the short 'Interludio', placed third, with its magically gleaming tuned percussion, take us straight to the frozen north. In between we head east for a quirky dance in quintuple rhythm, underpinned by Arabian drums (with flugelhorns and heckelphone also getting an outing). Finally a kind of bacchanale, in nine then 11 beats, drives towards a jubilant conclusion. The imaginative resources that weave this disparate material together are as crucial to the resulting exhilaration as the ideas themselves.

Minea is if anything even more extrovert in tone, as befits a commission from the

Minnesota Orchestra and Osmo Vänskä. Yet for all its teeming inventive energy, there is never a suspicion of slickness. Here, too, Aho expands his resources via engagement with exotic sources, in this case evocations of Indian ragas, and Japanese as well as Arabian instruments. Hence the subtitle, *Concertante Music for Orchestra*.

The Double Bass Concerto is less exhibitionist and more interior, as is perhaps the nature of the beast. At the opening there is an unexpected echo of Tippett's Fourth Symphony, with its imitation of human breath. Many passing beauties, not least in the soloist's ventures into harmonics and *pizzicato*, cannot disguise that this is one of Aho's more elusive scores. But what a fine disc this is overall, not least in its execution, recording and documentation. **David Fanning**

Bax

Symphony in F (realised Yates)

Royal Scottish National Orchestra / Martin Yates

Dutton Epoch (M) CDLX7308 (78' • DDD)



It is often the case that the first symphonic essay of any aspiring composer tends to be

long. Nevertheless, Bax's Symphony in F must be one of the most extraordinarily ambitious initial canvases for any composer at the beginning of his career. At just over 78 minutes, it reflects the extended projections of Mahler and Rachmaninov, some of which Bax certainly encountered on the European continent.

Written during a love affair in 1907, and time spent in Dresden, Bax's Symphony was left complete in short score (partly at University College, Cork, where I saw it as a young lecturer, and partly in private possession) but has been very sympathetically orchestrated here by Martin Yates. Although as yet stylistically inchoate (one can, as Lewis Foreman points out in his excellent booklet-notes, detect

strong elements of Glazunov and Strauss), the work is a fascinating mélange of rich thematic material and developmental processes in which Bax's individual voice is often discernible. A dramatic first movement, almost balletic in demeanour. is a wash of orchestral colour. The second movement, to me much more Baxian in gesture (and somewhat more redolent of his Celtic Twilight obsession), is a stronger lyrical essay, while the demonic third, inspired by Hofmannsthal's Der Tor und der Tod ('The Fool and Death'), is distinctly Straussian in its Till Eulenspiegel eccentricities. The last movement, by far the longest at 25 minutes, is an elongated fantasia where the thematic ideas are treated cyclically. A demanding work, it is performed with energy and empathy by Yates and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. For any lover of early-20thcentury British symphonic music, this is a must. Jeremy Dibble

Beppe

Remote Galaxy^a. Distant Words^b. Lost in September. Tightrope Walking Beneath Heaven. Flute Concerto No 2^c

 $^{\mathrm{a}}$ Emily Beynon $f\!f$ $^{\mathrm{b}}$ Mark van de Wiel $C\!f$

^cRalph Rousseau va da gamba

Philharmonia Orchestra / Vladimir Ashkenazy 2L (F) ⇒ 2L100PABD (71' • DXD)



The composer formerly known as Fred Jonny Berg here releases his second

collaboration with the Philharmonia, Ashkenazy and flautist Emily Beynon. Some technical aspects of the release were noted, and praised, when it was one of the test discs for February's audio section.

2L's recording – Blu-ray and accessible in 5.1 and 7.1 DTS, 2.0 LPCM and 9.1 Auro-3D – does indeed sound breathtaking. This is not only effective in its capture of individual sonorities in the orchestra but in its ability to provide coherence in potentially tricky balances. In

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the closing Flute Concerto No 2, Beynon's solo line has (or would have) to battle with a Brucknerian weight of organ and brass, hardly the norm for a wind concerto even in our post-Ferneyhough repertoire.

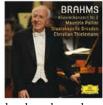
A thumbnail sketch of Flint Juventino Beppe's musical idiom might refer frequently to the tonal masters of the earlier 20th century - Holst (especially 'Uranus'), Sibelius, even Elgar in more pastoral moments. At a first hearing the music can seem to alternate with too much regularity between the elegiac and epic, atmospheric outer space - Beppe's take on John Williams's take on Holst.

For all the fluent and careful instrumentation, this can sound samev. Yet repeated listening does reveal more interesting harmonic adventures. Lost in September (about a missing dog) and Tightrope Walking Beneath Heaven (about just that) have a sense of humour and a genuine sense of danger. Even more attractive - because it covers the widest range of moods - is the Flute Concerto. Here the unconventional heavy scoring of two of the movements is well counterparted by some testing solo writing.

Remote Galaxy and Distant Words also make good use of solo instruments. In the former the (in context) eccentric and anachronistic sound of Ralph Rousseau's viola da gamba sounds like historically informed performance visiting the Planetarium. In the latter the range (and jazzy virtuosity) of Mark van de Wiel's clarinet seems to play the unsung role of a lover. This, the lightest piece in the collection, surely deserves a further shelf life in the concert hall. Mike Ashman

Brahms

Piano Concerto No 2, Op 83 Maurizio Pollini pf Staatskapelle Dresden / Christian Thielemann DG (F) 479 2384GH (47' • DDD)



Those who admire the intelligent, direct and stylishly lean virtuosity that Maurizio Pollini

has long brought to Brahms's Second Concerto will want to know how the pianist's new recording with Christian Thielemann and the Staatskapelle Dresden compares with his two earlier versions, both conducted by the late Claudio Abbado. Sonically speaking, the present performance's warm ambience and natural soloist/orchestra balance resembles the 1977 Vienna traversal, as opposed to the overly close and occasionally congested

engineering of the 1995 Berlin recording. Pollini's gold-standard technique remains impressively commanding, although the scherzo's unaccompanied sotto voce legato octave and double-note passage and the launch of the finale's Un poco più presto are not quite so light and supple as before. On the other hand, the first movement lacks nothing in power and tonal heft, while Pollini imbues the magical trills and broken octaves (beginning at bar 335) with newfound inflections and shadings.

The slow movement is quicker now, largely due to Pollini's more engaging left-hand lines. The Allegro grazioso unfolds more spontaneously; listen, for example, to Thielemann speeding up when the orchestra answers the main theme, and other whimsical yet undisruptive adjustments. Yet the conductor's propensity for blended, rounded sonorities sometimes softens crucial rhythmic underpinnings and obscures detail, as for instance in the scherzo's opening pages, where the strings' marcato syncopations go for nothing and the clarinet/bassoon chords so piercingly articulated in the Arrau/ Giulini recording vanish into the mist. In short, Pollini's third Brahms B flat confirms his authoritative musicianship, even though it will not displace the more thoroughly integrated and vibrant Freire/ Chailly, Buchbinder/Harnoncourt and Serkin/Szell (Sony, 9/67 - nla) Brahms B flat collaborations as points of reference. Jed Distler

Selected comparisons:

Arrau, Philh Orch, Giulini (3/63^R) (EMI) 918432-2 Pollini, VPO, Abbado (8/77R) (DG) 453 067-2GTA2 or 479 0913GB8

Pollini, BPO, Abbado (4/98R) (DG) 457 837-2GH2 Buchbinder, RCO, Harnoncourt

(8/00R) (APEX) 2564 60707-2

Freire, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orch, Chailly (9/06) (DECC) 475 7637DX2

Britten

Cello Symphony, Op 68a. Cello Sonata, Op 65b Zuill Bailev VC bNatasha Paremski pf aNorth Carolina Symphony Orchestra / Grant Llewellyn Telarc (F) TEL34412-02 (56' • DDD) ^aRecorded live, April 2013



We are not lacking top-drawer versions of these two probing, Rostropovich-inspired

masterpieces, not least from the great cellist himself on Decca (uniquely cherishable documents, both, with the composer either conducting the ECO or at the piano). Zuill Bailey's new live

GRAMOPHONE Archive

Britten's Cello Symphony

Three earlier recordings of Britten's Cello Symphony - and how Gramophone rated them



DECEMBER 1964

Britten Cello Symphony Mstislav Rostropovich VC ECO / Benjamin Britten Decca O SXL6138 (12in • 32s 3d)

Performances by what one

might call the original cast almost always have something special about them. The present record captures the very individual orchestral sound and places the soloist in an absolutely natural relationship with it. As for the performance, it is quite simply beyond praise. Rostropovich is so completely inside the music that one ceases to be aware whether what he is doing is difficult or not (much of it is) and the English Chamber Orchestra play with a rhythmic precision and a dynamic range that give every detail its due weight and character. Jeremy Noble



MAY 2011

Britten Cello Symphony Paul Watkins VC BBC PO / Edward Gardner Chandos (F) CHAN10658 (76' • DDD)

music in the opera house has done Edward Gardner no harm at all. By pacing the score tautly and making sure this often brooding music never stands still, he provides a strong framework for Paul Watkins's expressive playing. The deep concentration and nimble technique that he brings to the solo part make this a satisfying performance - at least until comparisons with the composer's own.

Richard Fairman

GRAMOPHONE FEBRUARY 2013



Britten Cello Symphony Alban Gerhardt VC BBC Scottish SO / Andrew Manze Hyperion © 2 CDA67941-2 (119' • DDD)

Gerhardt and Manze really put their foot down on the accelerator. The BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra is rough and ready but Manze keeps wind to the fore and clips the rhythms short: the baleful theme in wind octaves towards the end of the opening movement wails like the east wind in Peter Grimes and the faster variations of the finale scamper along brilliantly. Gerhardt has a cool-headed precision Britten would probably have admired. Given Gerhardt's fine Britten credentials, this makes a recommendable package. Richard Fairman

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of Melancholy

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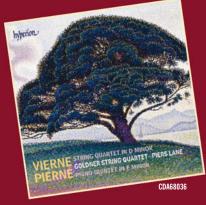
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Thomas Dunford

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CDA68007

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A more engaging left hand: Maurizio Pollini, with Christian Thielemann and the Dresden Staatskapelle, makes his third recording of Brahms's Second Piano Concerto

performance of the Symphony from April of last year is a rather more expansive statement than the recent, leaner Alban Gerhardt/BBC Scottish SO/Manze collaboration for Hyperion - in which respect it resembles instead Paul Watkins's majestic reading with Edward Gardner and the BBC Philharmonic (Chandos). Bailey plays with compelling assurance, generosity of feeling and beguilingly rich tone – and he enjoys watchful support from the North Carolina Symphony under Grant Llewellyn - but there isn't quite the enviable tautness, cathartic spontaneity and palpable sense of teamwork that mark out the latter partnership's classy display (Gardner has proved to be an especially insightful Britten interpreter), to say nothing of Slava's outsize personality and extraordinary fervour on that famous 1964 world premiere recording, still unassailable to my ears - and such vividly truthful sound and balance, too!

For the Sonata Bailey teams up with the Moscow-born virtuoso Natasha Paremski with results that are consistently alive, pungently characterful and commandingly articulate. Only in the plangent central 'Elegia' did I find myself wishing for a tad greater intensity – both Rostropovich and Gerhardt (with Steven Osborne) are simply

electrifying here – but this remains a most persuasive account, and if Bailey's reading of the Cello Symphony isn't necessarily a world-beater, his many admirers will rightly want to hear it. Really fine sound and balance, too. Andrew Achenbach

Vc Sym – selected comparisons: Rostropovich, ECO, Britten

(12/64⁸) (LOND) 425 100-2LM or 478 3577DB5 Watkins, BBC PO, Gardner (5/11) (CHAN) CHAN10658 Gerhardt, BBC Scottish SO, Manze

(2/13) (HYPE) CDA67941/2

Bruch · Tchaikovsky

Bruch Scottish Fantasy, Op 46 Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto, Op 35 Ning Feng Vii Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin / Yang Yang

Channel Classics (F) ... CCSSA34913 (71' • DDD/DSD)



Ning Feng's account of the Tchaikovsky is notably elegant. The fast, high passages

sound wonderfully clear and pure, and the first movement, in particular, abounds in balletic grace – surely a part of the music's essential character. In the cadenza,

performed just as Tchaikovsky wrote it, without any of the little 'improvements' we often hear, he reveals a finely honed sense of timing, which also comes into play in the introductory solo to the finale; and as the finale gets under way, Feng's liveliness and precision ensure an impression of real vivacity. The Andante, on the slow side, is persuasively elegiac. The only point where Ning Feng's refinement hampers his performance is during the finale's folksy episodes where, ignoring the composer's indication for glissando, he sounds altogether too polite for such rustic music. Here Ray Chen hits exactly the right style and, for myself, I'd prefer Chen's more overtly emotional approach to the concerto and his greater sense of spontaneity. He also benefits from an inspired accompaniment, masterfully directed by Daniel Harding.

Ning Feng's sensitivity bears fruit in a deeply poetic account of the introductory section to the *Scottish Fantasy*, his delicate, lonely presence contrasting beautifully with the solemn, gloomy orchestral setting. And he's in his element with the virtuoso high jinks of the *Scherzo* and finale, tossed off without turning a hair. But in other places he appears too cool and detached for this highly romantic score. One longs for a

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touch of the passionate warmth that Heifetz brought to it. Duncan Druce

Tchaikovsky – selected comparison: Chen, Swedish RSO, Harding (6/12) (SONY) 88697 98410-2

Bruckner · J Strauss II

Bruckner Symphony No 2 (arr Payne) J Strauss II Wein, Weib und Gesang, Op 333 (arr Berg) Royal Academy of Music Soloists Ensemble / **Trevor Pinnock**

Linn 🖲 🤔 CKD422 (64' • DDD/DSD)



Arrangements such as this exceptionally skilful chamber reworking of

Bruckner's Second Symphony by Anthony Payne were meat and potatoes to Schoenberg's Society for Private Musical Performance. What you get is the full run of scaffolding minus a few bars (ie some optional cuts), and a lack of repeats in the Scherzo. To say that clarity is a pay-off is rather to state the obvious, and the same goes for a sense of intimacy, but neither virtue would be desirable if the playing of the Royal Academy of Music Soloists Ensemble was less exceptional than it is, or the sound quality less present.

The vital question is: does Payne's transcription pay dividends that are as high for the listener as they are for the players, Bruckner's language being so securely wedded to the meaty sound of a full orchestra? Not sure, to be honest. But have those pulsing opening semiquavers (here on two violins and viola) ever sounded quite so reminiscent of the opening of Beethoven's Ninth? The ominous exchanges between cello, trumpet and later the rest of the orchestra - settling down eventually to woodwinds chattering above a timpani drone - hardly compromise on atmosphere. Trevor Pinnock keeps to a very steady tempo, unfolding each paragraph with a sense of inevitability that compensates in structural terms for what it lacks, or for what we might miss, in terms of sonority. And yet he's never for a moment inflexible.

The fluttering flutes in the development section (set against agitated pizzicatos) are especially effective and so is the tender string phrasing at the start of the slow movement, though the big climax from 9'29" is one point where clarity is less obvious than it might have been (try by way of a comparison Günter Wand and the Cologne RSO - 1877 First Critical Edition, ed Robert Haas, 1938 - at 10'39" into track 2). The Scherzo's Trio works

especially well and there are times in the finale where the music takes flight in a way that I've virtually never heard in an orchestral performance (just get that piano). Those passages alone would deem the disc an enjoyable supplement to your existing Bruckner collection. Alban Berg's colour-conscious arrangement of Strauss's Wine, Women and Song (where the harmonium plays a very prominent role), lustily played, is both an appropriate and a happily conclusive fill-up. Rob Cowan Bruckner - selected comparison:

Cologne RSO, Wand (2/90) (RCA) 09026 63932-2

Bruckner

Symphonies - No O, 'Nullte'; No 00, 'Study Symphony' Aachen Symphony Orchestra / Marcus Bosch Coviello 🖲 🥯 COV31315 (78' • DDD/DSD) Recorded live in St Michael's Church, Aachen, May 26 & 28, 2012



When I opened the CD case for this useful coupling of Bruckner's two 'nullified'

symphonies I fully expected to find two CDs but, no, Coviello very helpfully accommodates the two works on a single 78-minute disc. Had Marcus Bosch taken Eliahu Inbal's option and played the F minor Study Symphony's sizeable exposition repeat (all four minutes' worth), then things might have worked out differently; but, like Georg Tintner (Naxos) and the excellent Stanisław Skrowaczewski (Oehms), Bosch settles for a single-tier exposition. 'No 00' and 'No 0' aren't quite the close relations they might at first seem to be, as the next symphony after 'No 00' is No 1; then comes 'No 0', followed by No 2. What's for sure is that both works were declared gilt nicht (doesn't count) by Bruckner, hence the rather unflattering designation.

The relatively classical F minor was written in 1863 as an exercise under Otto Kitzler's instruction in form and orchestration. In performance terms, Inbal and his Frankfurt players cut the stronger profile but Bosch's light, neatly dispatched reading of the first movement works well. He shapes the score with an attentive ear, making the most of Bruckner's imaginative instrumentation (ie in the telling alternation of winds and strings from 5'42" and the tougher-grained tutti shortly afterwards). At just 10'18", Bosch's account of the second movement is significantly swifter than Inbal (13'11"), Skrowaczewski (12'26") or Tintner (12'36"), mainly

because he takes a faster approach to the animated middle section.

The D minor Symphony ('No 0') is both better known and a far better work, well on the way to the glories of mature Bruckner, especially the slow movement. Bosch's lively opening contrasts markedly with the slow, purposeful, even a little downtrodden Lorin Maazel (whose Munich performance nonetheless has bags of character), but for me the two ideal interpreters of this piece are Bernard Haitink (newly reissued as part of the 'Haitink Symphony Edition') and Skrowaczewski, both performances part of fine complete cycles. So where does this leave Bosch's coupling? Lively, interpretatively sympathetic, well played, reverberantly recorded and a useful appendage to cycles that you may already own. But were I to recommend seperate CDs of the two symphonies, I'd opt, where available, for Inbal or Skrowaczewski in 'No 00' and Skrowaczewski or Haitink in 'No 0'. Rob Cowan

Sym No 00 - selected comparisons: Frankfurt RSO, Inbal (6/92R) (TELD) 2564 68022-8 RSNO, Tintner (5/01) (NAXO) 8 554432, 8 501205 Saarbrücken RSO, Skrowaczewski (OEHM) OC208, OC207 Sym No 0 - selected comparisons: Bavarian RSO, Maazel (2/11) (BRKL) 900711 RCO, Haitink (3/14) (DECC) 478 6360DC36 Saarbrücken RSO, Skrowaczewski (OEHM) OC209, OC207

Bruckner



Symphony No 6 (original version)

Staatskapelle Berlin / Daniel Barenboim Accentus (F) ACC202176: (F) ACC102176 (59' • NTSC • 16:9 • 1080i • DTS-HD MA5.1, DTS5.1 & PCM stereo • 0)

Video director Henning Kasten Recorded live at the Philharmonie, Berlin. June 22, 2010



I am no sceptic where the filming of concerts is concerned. Given a meticulously prepared

shooting script by a director who knows the music or who has worked closely with the conductor, the filmed concert can be an education in itself. Remove that prerequisite, however, and you can end up with a product which is at best dull, at worst a hindrance to informed and pleasurable listening.

Henning Kasten's film report on this live Berlin Bruckner Sixth begins well enough; as, indeed, it should do given the clarity with which, thematically and instrumentally, Bruckner lays out his

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GRAMOPHONE Collector

CPE BACH

Richard Wigmore listens to a selection of discs that have appeared as the bicentenary of the most fascinating of Bach's sons gets under way



Care for detail: Christian Zacharias gets CPE Bach year underway with the Berlin Symphonies in Lausanne

ost famous and fascinating of JS Bach's sons, Carl Philipp Emanuel was something of a split musical personality: harpsichordist to Frederick the Great who turned out pieces in the newly fashionable *galant* style, yet in the works written for his own pleasure acquired a reputation for 'bizarrerie'; and, later in life, Kantor in Hamburg who produced ephemeral odes and cantatas while allowing his genius free rein in some of the 18th century's most audacious symphonies and keyboard works.

If Bach's Berlin symphonies from the 1740s and '50s are less outré than the later ones for Hamburg, they can still startle and shock. The Lausanne Chamber Orchestra's new recording of six of them provoked mixed reactions. I enjoyed the polish and spirit of the playing, and Christian Zacharias's care for detail. Yet the music's dangerous, anarchic tendencies seem underplayed. One problem is that modern instruments impose a veneer of suavity on CPE's invention. Another is that Zacharias opts for some rather sober tempi, not least in the rampaging outer movements of the E minor Symphony. For an extreme contrast, turn to the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin (Harmonia Mundi), who tear into this astonishing music with inspired abandon.

When Baron Gottfried van Swieten commissioned a set of string symphonies from Bach in 1773, he stipulated that the composer should 'let himself go, without

worrying about difficulties of execution'. Bach took the cue. Paradox is the order of the day, with each fleeting promise of galant euphony disrupted by frenzied activity. Again using modern instruments, Wolfram Christ and his Stuttgart players generate more animal energy than Zacharias. There is colour aplenty in the playing; and the flamboyant fortepiano continuo is in keeping with music that often seems to recreate in orchestral terms the improvisatory boldness of CPE's keyboard works. On the downside, Christ's rather blunt direction can shortchange the slow movements' strange mix of self-communing pathos and stuttering incoherence, while bass-lines sound too beefy, an impression enhanced by the slightly boomy recording. There's much to enjoy here. But to hear these essential CPE works in all their thrilling, disturbing volatility, go to Trevor Pinnock and the English Concert (Archiv).

You'd barely recognise Bach the fiery iconoclast in a two-disc reissue of sacred cantatas from his Hamburg years. There are flashes of individual genius here, as in the sombrely chromatic Passion music in *Anbetung dem Erbarmer*. One or two impressive fugal movements confirm that CPE had learnt a thing or two from his father. But tripping *galanterie* rules, with the personal sentiment of *Empfindsamkeit* reduced to a watery sentimentality. Still, if you want to hear one of the century's great originals at his most amiably

compliant, these 1987 performances from the Rheinische Kantorei and Das Kleine Konzert under Hermann Max serve pretty well. Orchestral playing and choral singing are lively and responsive, while soprano Barbara Schlick, singing with airy grace, is outstanding among the soloists.

By far the most imaginative work on these discs, the Heilig (ie Sanctus) for double choir, also turns up on a Harmonia Mundi recording that recreates part of a Hamburg charity concert in 1786, the last time Bach directed in public. In a conspectus of his composing career, he also chose the Magnificat of 1749 plus the first of the four symphonies from 1775-76. This is slightly more classically poised than the Hamburg string symphonies but still intensely characteristic in its impassioned rhetoric and harmonic shocks. In part a homage to JS's setting, the Magnificat can sometimes outstay its welcome, above all in the gargantuan final fugue. Not here. Hans-Christoph Rademann and his Berlin forces make the strongest possible case for it, with fresh, athletic choral singing, playing of crackling, fizzing energy and excellent solo work. Elizabeth Watts is true and touching in 'Quia respexit' and contralto Wiebke Lehmkuhl brings a mingled warmth and purity to the beautiful 'Suscepit Israel'. Lehmkuhl also launches the Heilig, where the recording creates an ideal spatial separation between the distant angelic choir and the more 'present' chorus of nations on earth, singing in keys remote from each other. This is the finest recording of CPE's choral masterpiece I have heard. Crowning the disc, the D major Symphony combines torrential energy, lyrical tenderness (in the hauntingly scored Largo) and, not least, transparency of texture, so that flutes and oboe lines really tell against the composer's trademark swirling, scurrying strings. This looks set to be one of the discs of the CPE anniversary year. 6

THE RECORDINGS



CPE Bach Berlin Symphonies **Lausanne CO / Zacharias** MDG (P) MDG940 1824-6



CPE Bach Hamburg Symphonies **Stuttgart CO / Christ** Hänssler Classic **(E)** CD98 637



CPE Bach Cantatas **Rheinsiche Kantorei**; **Kleine Konzert / Max** Brilliant Classics **(S) (Q) (9)** 94817



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material. It is when the thematic material begins to diffuse itself in transitional passages that the trouble starts. After which it is the great points of arrival – the firstmovement recapitulation or the movement's glorious coda about which Sir Donald Tovey waxed eloquent - which are most at risk from Bruckner-lite direction that shows too little concern for the music's line and harmonic movement.

Rhythm is also misconstrued. How, one wonders, is the approach to that firstmovement recapitulation advantaged by a long-shot of the stage from which the camera slowly withdraws even as the music presses forwards with added rhythmic and dynamic intensity? As for the podium itself, cutaway shots to the conductor are mainly used as a form of randomised infill.

Barenboim has made two previous recordings of the Sixth, the first with the Chicago Symphony for Deutsche Grammophon, the second with the Berlin Philharmonic for Teldec. This latest performance mixes cogency with ease, until the finale, where once again a quickish tempo is married to a powerfully fluctuating pulse. The Berlin Staatskapelle do all their chief conductor asks of them, which in terms of dynamic pointing is not always a great deal. The playing of the keening oboe solo at the start of the Adagio not so much ignores Bruckner's dynamic markings as reverses them. And the very end of the symphony is something of a damp squib as the orchestra loses rhythm and focus of tone in a mismanaged slowing in the final bar. Richard Osborne Selected comparisons:

Chicago SO, Barenboim (11/78R) (DG) 477 9803GB10 BPO, Barenboim (2/99R) (WARN) 2564 61891-2

Bruckner





Symphony No 9 (ed Nowak, 1951) London Symphony Orchestra / Bernard Haitink LSO Live (B) . LSO0746 (67' • DDD/DSD) Recorded live at the Barbican, London, February 17 & 21, 2013



From Claudio Abbado to Günter Wand, this greatest of all unfinished

masterpieces has repeatedly appealed to great conductors nearing the end of their careers, not all of them 'natural' Brucknerians. The Ninth was also the last piece Leonard Bernstein prepared with his beloved Vienna Philharmonic. In this regard Bernard Haitink's credentials are unmatched. His first recording of the work, set down in Amsterdam's Concertgebouw

in December 1965, was initially reviewed as long ago as October 1966 when Deryck Cooke thought it the best version then available. While one hopes the octogenarian maestro will enjoy many more years of distinguished music-making, this latest rendering is nothing if not realistic about the prospects. Where other interpreters soften Bruckner's vision, Haitink is uncompromisingly architectural, no texture self-consciously beautified, no transition rendered falsely emotive, little reassurance offered except in passing. Whatever the tempo, his conducting continues to impress by virtue of its firm sense of line. And in Bruckner's leavetaking above all there is no mistaking the finality of the destination.

Granted, there is now another school of thought. Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Sir Simon Rattle hold that the score can no longer be considered spiritually complete with its slow movement a necessary and compelling end point, finding sufficient continuity in what survives of the finale to prompt a rethink about the tone and style of what comes before. That might imply a lighter touch, or even a conjectural fourmovement completion. Not so for Haitink: 'You have to respect life but you also have to respect death.' The dissonant climax of his slow movement is resolutely old-school and terrifying with it, not one whit underplayed. The final bars' shafts of light are articulated in objective fashion rather than adulterated with healing balm. According to the composer Robert Simpson: 'The evidence of [Bruckner's] spiritual as well as physical travail can be seen in the nature of the music itself, often dark to the pitch of blackness, rent with such anguish as he had so far succeeded in keeping out of his music.' Haitink is perhaps more stoical.

Listeners attached to the recordings made by the conductor as a fresh-faced youngster should note that his initial movement is now 27'31" to 1965's 23'14", yet there's no loss of focus. Where some may part company with him is in the Scherzo, its dour, monolithic tread harder to take, although the Trio is notably fleet he has always favoured a big contrast there. Yes, the *Adagio* is broad, if not more so than under Carlo Maria Giulini in Vienna's Musikverein (DG, 9/89). In London's Barbican Hall the LSO play quite superbly for Haitink and it is not their fault that the auditorium will never sound like the ideal Bruckner venue. While the sound stage lacks depth and air, its un-ecclesiastical baldness provides a new perspective on the argument. You won't quickly forget those stern, unyielding climaxes underpinned by

black, cadaverous timps. Is this great music-making? The player in the lift thought so and so do I. David Gutman Selected comparison:

RCO, Haitink (10/66^R, 3/14) (DECC) 478 6360DB36

A Bush

Africa, Op 73a. Symphony No 2, 'Nottingham', Op 33. Fantasia on Soviet Themes, Op 24 aPeter Donohoe pf

Royal Scottish National Orchestra / Martin Yates Dutton Epoch (M) CDLX7306 (73' • DDD)



Commissioned to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the founding of the City

of Nottingham, the Second of Alan Bush's four symphonies dates from 1949. In May of the previous year, the politically active Bush had travelled to Communistcontrolled Prague to attend an international conference organised as a direct response to the Zhdanov Doctrine, and the Nottingham Symphony reflects his desire 'to make a more determined effort to bring out a national character in my music'. It's a readily assimilable creation cast in four movements, each bearing a descriptive title. 'Sherwood Forest' launches proceedings in bucolic fashion and is followed by 'Clifton Grove', a languidly beautiful evocation of the serenely flowing River Trent. 'Castle Rock' comprises a rhythmically spry scherzo and the symphony concludes with a vivacious finale ('Goose Fair') incorporating material from earlier movements. Bush submitted this very likeable work to the BBC where it was favourably assessed by a panel of fellow composers which included Rubbra, Alwyn and Berkeley, the last-named declaring it to be 'written with the greatest skill and accomplishment'.

The symphony is preceded by Africa (1972), the third of Bush's four concertante offerings for piano and orchestra. Inspired by a United Nations resolution and boasting an unashamedly political programme embracing the Declaration of Human Rights, this red-blooded, 25-minute 'symphonic movement' in three interlinked sections contains so much invention and such brilliantly idiomatic piano-writing that it certainly warrants its present belated revival here. Rounding off proceedings comes the Fantasia on Soviet Themes, a tuneful medley of no great consequence from 1942, orchestrated in 1944 and premiered at the 1945 Proms.

Martin Yates's performances with the RSNO have both dash and dedication to

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Brilliantly idiomatic: Peter Donohoe takes on the piano part in Alan Bush's 'symphonic movement' Africa with the RSNO and Martin Yates at Henry Wood Hall, Glasgow

commend them, though Douglas Bostock's rival reading of the symphony with the RNCM SO on Classico is by no means displaced; Peter Donohoe makes a superb job of the solo part in *Africa*. Vivid if slightly aggressive sound and useful notes by Lewis Foreman complement this typically bold issue from Dutton which is well worth hunting down. Andrew Achenbach

Nottingham Sym – selected comparison: RNCM SO, Bostock (A/04) (CLAS) CLASSCD484

Jolivet · Kabalevsky · Mendelssohn

'A Tribute to Erling Blöndal Bengtsson, Vol 3'
Jolivet Suite en concerta
Kabalevsky Cello Concerto No 1, Op 49b
Mendelssohn Cello Sonata, Op 58c
Erling Blöndal Bengtsson vc cAnker Blyme pf
blceland Symphony Orchestra /
Jean-Pierre Jacquillat

Danacord © DACOCD740 (59' • ADD)

Recorded live a1970, b1973, cat the Nordic House,
Reykjavík, October 11, 1980



This latest Danacord issue is designed as a memorial tribute to the great Danish

cellist Erling Blöndahl Bengtsson, who died last June. These three items were recorded by Icelandic Radio and have never appeared before. The recordings were made live, adding vividness and intensity, and though they were recorded over a period of almost 10 years, the quality is remarkably consistent.

The Kabalevsky is the more approachable of his two cello concertos, and though it cannot match the memorability of his piano works it is cleanly laid out and easily rhythmic, in compound time in the first movement and gently lyrical in the central slow movement. The finale brings chattering themes leading to a big, effective climax just before the end. Not just Bengtsson but the Icelandic players give warmly committed performances.

The glorious Mendelssohn Cello Sonata brings the gem of the collection, for Bengtsson and his pianist, Anker Blyme, demonstrate throughout that this is a 'feelgood' work, with its first movement in an exhilarating compound time that sticks in the memory, before the second movement in a lightly tripping *Allegretto* two-in-a-bar. The *Adagio* slow movement is relatively brief, with its spread chords for the piano, before the chattering *Allegro* of the finale.

It would be idle to suppose that the unaccompanied *Suite en concert* by André Jolivet comes near to matching the other two works but its improvisation-like paragraphs are beautifully played by Bengtsson, with total commitment. Plainly this is music designed to please the cellist.

Altogether, a fitting memorial to a cellist who for Danacord over the years recorded virtually all the most important cello works in the repertory, including the cello concertos of Dvořák, Elgar and Walton.

Edward Greenfield

Mahler

Symphony No 2, 'Resurrection'
(arr Kaplan/Mathes)
Marlis Petersen sop Janina Baechle mez
Wiener Singakademie; Vienna Chamber
Orchestra / Gilbert Kaplan
Avie ® ② AV2290 (86' • DDD)



Mahler enthusiasts have cause to be grateful to Gilbert Kaplan, the biggest

enthusiast of them all, one moreover with the wherewithal to sponsor such projects as a collection of all known photographs of

the composer, a beautiful facsimile of the manuscript score of the Resurrection and a critical edition of that work, credited to Kaplan and Renate Stark-Voit. His latest wheeze, in partnership with Rob Mathes, is to cut down its orchestral fabric to a sinfonietta-sized ensemble of 56. The result is justified by analogy with the reductions made of the Fourth Symphony and Das Lied von der Erde at the behest of Arnold Schoenberg, and brings the orchestral forces closer to the size Mahler had in mind when he envisaged the Resurrection's opening movement as a freestanding entity entitled Todtenfeier. But isn't the undertaking superfluous now that the finished symphony is no longer a special event in the concert hall or on disc? Even if the interventionist alchemy of a Leonard Bernstein is perhaps inconceivable in these days of Mahlerian glut, what we need most are performers capable of projecting that special sense of occasion. It is in this respect that Kaplan might be found wanting.

Universal Edition's publication of the latest revamp gives him the opportunity to mount the podium once again and record the piece for the third time. There is little consensus about the viability of his endeavours in this area, not least because Kaplan is a wealthy amateur whose piano lessons went no further than yours or mine. A master of marketing, his earliest set (Pickwick, 1/89 - nla), featuring sundry Welsh choirs and a gung-ho LSO, is said to have shifted more copies than any other Mahler recording. Kathleen Ferrier aficionados might not be alone in querying those statistics. I don't suppose Kaplan pretends to be a great Mahler conductor as opposed to an uber-faithful servant of what is, after all, the only complete composition he has ever directed in public, but he plainly relies on the willing co-operation of colleagues to an extent which makes for less than incendiary results.

So it proves here. The hollowed-out score is rendered that much paler and dimmer than it needed to be. I cannot say whether the dearth of potentially destabilising passion and attack, like the preference for sluggish tempi, is a sensible precaution on the part of an amateur maestro or genuine interpretative preference (born of substantial albeit narrow experience). Entries are not always absolutely unanimous even so. Still, the timbre of mezzo Janina Baechle is well suited to the 'Urlicht' - and she at least appears to be at ease with the experience. The venerable choir, presumably trained by someone else, is also on form and the recorded sound is luminous and spacious

in the ensemble's regular home, Vienna's Konzerthaus. Producer Rainer Maillard (who worked on Boulez's as well as Kaplan's DG recording of the *Resurrection*) is the ultimate pro.

If the Kaplan/Mathes arrangement really does help less prestigious amateur ensembles mount local performances, the endeavour might have a point and the recording serve as a useful template. As for repeated listening in the home, I can't see it having much traction given the absence of old-school interpretative flair, let alone the heavyweight orchestral sonority Mahler demands. Even Kaplan fans may find that sensational final climax a disappointment. It's a long time coming. Worse, the music conspicuously fails to build towards it. His LSO version, flawed as it is, conveys much more excitement at the close and is capped by real church bells...if you can find it. Then again, we're still a very long way from Claudio Abbado in Lucerne, whose 'celebration of the purest joy' is available in multiple formats. David Gutman

Selected comparisons:

VPO, Kaplan (12/03) (DG) 474 380-2GH2

Lucerne Fest Orch, Abbado (12/04) (DG) 477 5082GH2

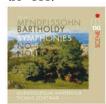
(EURO) № 205 3269 or 205 8574, ≥ 205 3264

LSO, Bernstein (2/06) (DG) № 073 4089GH

VPO, Boulez (8/06) (DG) 477 6004GH

Mendelssohn

Symphonies - No 1, Op 11; No 5, 'Reformation', Op 107 **Musikkollegium Winterthur / Thomas Zehetmair** Dabringhaus und Grimm (E) MDG901 1814-6 (58' • DDD)



A very distinctive coupling this, stylised in the extreme and with a keen-eared

approach to dynamics that is quite unlike anyone else's. The Reformation is a real gem, with sweeping inflections and in the first movement a thrilling level of urgency (just beam up the drama that sets in at around 7'23"). Reviewing Edward Gardner's recent CBSO recording for Chandos, I wrote that 'I would have liked a little more repose for the scherzo, a softergrained Allegro vivace with more prominence given to those delightfully burbling flutes towards the end of the movement'. Zehetmair's scherzo is certainly softer-grained, marginally slower too, which makes for a more genial effect. The Andante, again taken at a slightly broader pace than on Gardner's version, is extremely beautiful, texturally warm but expressively restrained; and the solo flute's

declamation of 'Ein feste Burg' has a sense of stillness that makes the subsequent gathering of winds and brass around it particularly moving. Gardner pounds away at the ensuing Allegro vivace like there's no tomorrow, speeding for the Allegro maestoso that follows, whereas Zehetmair matches the two allegros so the transition to the finale proper is entirely seamless, an approach also favoured by Sir Roger Norrington on his excellent Stuttgart recording for Hänssler Classic. Whether this marks the maestoso's arrival quite in the way that Mendelssohn envisaged is open to discussion, and the same goes for Zehetmair's wild accelerando around the movement's coda (from 7'42"), but I find the performance as a whole compelling.

Norrington and Zehetmair both couple the Reformation with the First Symphony but in the case of the latter my preferences swing into reverse. Although Zehetmair again offers a highly coloured take on the music, his tendency to taper string phrases with sudden decrescendos can be distracting, even though the playing of his Winterthur orchestra has enormous gusto. Norrington's approach is less mannered and his Minuet is broader than Zehetmair's by almost two minutes, no bad thing as it nudges the music a step or two in the direction of Schubert (whose similarly urgent Fourth Symphony was composed eight years earlier). So, if it's the Reformation alone you're after, I would recommend sampling Zehetmair at the very least: see how you take to his varieties of dynamic inflection. I loved his recording but didn't particularly care for his rather affected account of the First, so if you want this particular coupling, Norrington on Hänssler is probably the safer bet. On the other hand, Gardner is still very much in the running with his excellent disc of Nos 4 and 5. Rob Cowan

Sym No 5 – selected comparison: CBSO, Gardner (2/14) (CHAN) CHSA5132 Syms Nos 1 & 5 – selected comparison: Stuttgart RSO, Norrington (HANS) CD93 132

Moeran

Overture for a Masque.
In the Mountain Country.
Rhapsodies - No 1; No 2; [No 3] in F sharp^a

^aBenjamin Frith ρf Ulster Orchestra / JoAnn Falletta



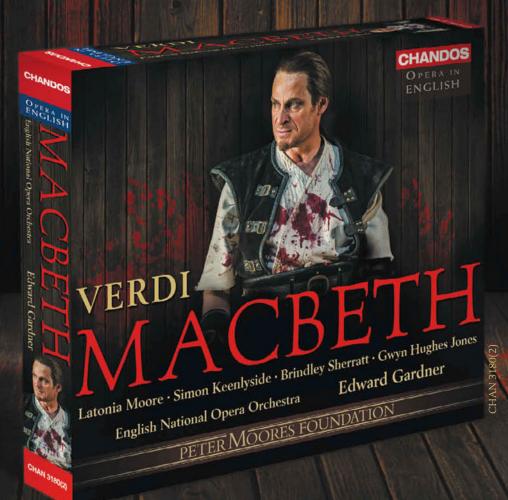
Naxos S 8 573106 (57' • DDD)

This is a welcome addition by the Ulster Orchestra and JoAnn Falletta to the



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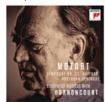
PETER MOORES FOUNDATION

recording of Moeran's orchestral rhapsodies and *In the Mountain Country* made in 1989 by the same orchestra and the late Vernon Handley for Chandos. Handley's beautifully shaped interpretations had a polish and insight, and were splendidly complemented by the clear sound of Chandos's engineering.

A hard act to follow, yet this new recording has a vibrancy and precision which is thoroughly beguiling. While I might occasionally argue about one or two of the chosen tempi, Falletta brings a vivacity and enthusiasm to these works which is infectious. The wartime Overture to a Masque (1944) is particularly sprightly, its buoyant opening tempo well contrasted with the delicious pastoral that forms the central paragraph (with some delightfully affecting oboe solos). Handley's First Rhapsody (1922) has, for me, a little more mystery, and his Second Rhapsody (1924/41) more spaciousness in the big Baxian tune at the heart of the work, but Falletta invokes a persuasive grey landscape (inspired by the scenery of County Mayo) for the much underrated In the Mountain Country (1921), and, with Benjamin Frith's delicate pianism, brings an immediacy to the bittersweet Rhapsody in F sharp (1943) where much of the detail of Moeran's brilliant score is satisfyingly discernible. A fine, scandalously neglected work, and the composer's only work for piano and orchestra, it rivals John Ireland's magnificent Piano Concerto of 1930, which may well have inspired it. Jeremy Dibble Rhapsodies, In the Mountain Country - selected comparison: Ulster Orch, Handley (9/89) (CHAN) CHAN8639

Mozart





A Harnoncourt recording will always leave a reviewer with a full page of notes, but

let me go straight to the bigger picture and say that these performances of Mozart's last Salzburg serenade and first Viennese symphony are probably the most characterful and entertaining you will ever come across. In the Serenade, especially, Harnoncourt has taken a hard look at this occasional piece and sought answers to what even the most routine-seeming passages are for. It was composed for the end-of-term leave-takings at Salzburg University (hence the surprise appearance

of a posthorn in the penultimate movement), and Harnoncourt admits that his drawn-out treatment of the first movement's second subject comes from imagining a student's reluctant goodbye to his host family; but actually he finds reasons everywhere for rubato and other theatrical gestures, feints and glances, all of which contribute to an atmosphere of warmth and jokey humour that seems totally appropriate to the entertainment for which it was intended. The results could have been heavy-handed but Harnoncourt's restless mind ensures that in fact they have the playful cleverness and charm of a Mozart letter.

Harnoncourt can add weight when he wants, though. He does in the Serenade's fine first movement - worthy of a place in any of Mozart's late Salzburg symphonies and again in the Haffner Symphony, holding the first movement back just slightly from its usual charge and the finale from its usual headlong scramble. The slow movement flows pleasantly, sounding uncannily like an ancestor of Beethoven's 'Scene by the Brook', and the Minuet enjoys its question-and-answer games. The Concentus Musicus Wien, captured in a clear and present recording, play with skill and colour, the string lines brightly alive and the winds relaxed and lovingly phrased. An enchanting outpouring of Mozartian spirit. Lindsay Kemp

Prokofiev

Piano Concerto No 3, Op 26^a. Symphony No 5, Op 100^b

aDenis Matsuev pf

Mariinsky Orchestra / Valery Gergiev
Mariinsky 🕒 ARO549 (71' • DDD/DSD)
Recorded live at the bMoscow Conservatoire,
April 2012; Concert Hall of the Mariinsky Theatre,
St Petersburg, June and October 2012



If their brutalisation of Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto is anything to go by,

Valery Gergiev's partnership with Denis Matsuev threatens to bring out the worst in both artists. The conductor's earlier Prokofiev concerto collaborations with Alexander Toradze are sometimes criticised for their heavy-handedness but this is something else again. Matsuev's volcanic virtuosity overshadows his subtler side to an extent one might have thought impossible in this repertoire, while unsympathetic miking lends his piano a hard, bright dazzle. Perhaps it was because I had come from listening to two relatively self-effacing

advocates of the work that such a high-speed, high-decibel harangue seemed so often beside the point. This is after all music only partly Russian and never 'Soviet' in spirit. In St Petersburg in 2012 there are passages in which every accent and rhythmic nuance is made crystal-clear, others in which the stabbing emphases make little sense, the general clamour not so much thrilling as exhausting. Matsuev has an unarguably staggering technique. But then so too does Nikolai Lugansky in his altogether quieter rendering under Kent Nagano. Jean-Efflam Bavouzet is different again, dapper and insouciant. Neither merely hammers away.

Raucous as it is in spots, Gergiev's latest performance of one of his favourite symphonies proves less extreme. At the start of the first-movement development, activity is stilled and the maestro coaxes a surprisingly Romantic response from the Mariinsky strings, the first of several such moments. Set alongside his earlier reading with the LSO, part of a variable, sometimes blazing Prokofiev symphony cycle captured live in 2004, Gergiev would appear to have mellowed, his first and third movements less ruthlessly driven. Just don't expect the smoother flow promoted by the Westerners cited below. The interpretation remains unambiguously Russian, a thing of dramatic gestures and rough-edged sonorities. The symphony alone was recorded away from the orchestra's home base during 2012's Moscow Easter Festival. Applause is excised. David Gutman

Pf Conc No 3 – selected comparisons:

Toradze, Mariinsky Th Orch, Gergiev
(4/98^R) (DECC) 478 3952DM2

Lugansky, DSO Berlin, Nagano (1/14) (AMBR) AM210

Bavouzet, BBC Phil, Noseda (3/14) (CHAN) CHAN10802

Sym No 5 – selected comparisons:

BPO, Karajan (12/00) (DG)
463 613-2GOR or 437 253-2GGA

LSO, Gergiev (6/06) (PHIL) 475 7655PM4

Saint-Saëns

'Complete Works for Violin & Orchestra, Cello & Orchestra'

São Paulo SO, Alsop (8/12) (NAXO) 8 573029

Soloists of the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel; Liège Royal Philharmonic Orchestra / Christian Arming

Zig-Zag Territoires (M) (3) ZZT335 (3h 53' • DDD)



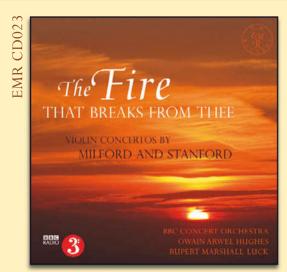
Last autumn the Capuçon brothers, Renaud and Gautier, brought out a fine disc

of Saint-Saëns's *La Muse et le poète* together with the Violin Concerto No 3 and the Cello Concerto No 1 (Erato, 1/14). There

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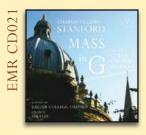
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has, in general, been a healthy stream of Saint-Saëns recordings over recent years but this three-disc set of nearly four hours' music is different in that it includes not only the concertos we rarely hear but also the various miniatures with which Saint-Saëns enriched the violin and cello repertoire.

Another major distinguishing feature is that all the soloists are young (but, obviously, prodigiously advanced) alumni of the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel in Belgium. And the talent here is quite breathtaking. Each of the three violin concertos is played by a different soloist -Liya Petrova, Jolente De Maeyer and Tatiana Samouil - and all three are completely spellbinding not just in technical matters but in stylistic sensibility and musical characterisation as well. Likewise on the second CD with Petrova alongside Elina Buksha, Harriet Langley and Maria Milstein in the Havanaise, Introduction and Rondo capriccioso and other less well-known concert pieces.

Adam Krzeszowiec is soloist in the First Cello Concerto, Deborah Pae in the Second, and both of them give any of the many other recordings already in the catalogue a good run for their money. What an inspired enterprise this is, ZZT opening the door to exceptionally gifted young players and with the Liège orchestra in peak form on a thoroughly impressive, exciting, highly desirable set.

Geoffrey Norris

Sibelius

Violin Concerto, Op 47^a. Karelia Suite, Op 11. The Swan of Tuonela, Op 22 No 2. Valse lyrique, Op 96a. Valse triste, Op 44 No 1. Andante festivo. Finlandia, Op 26

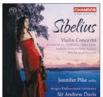
^aJennifer Pike *vn* Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra / Sir Andrew Davis

Chandos (F) . S CHSA5134 (78' • DDD)

Adès · Sibelius

Adès Violin Concerto 'Concentric Paths'
Sibelius Violin Concerto, Op 47. Humoresques Op 87 No 2; Op 89 Nos 2 & 3
Augustin Hadelich vn Royal Liverpool
Philharmonic Orchestra / Hannu Lintu

Avie (F) AV2276 (64' • DDD)





Hearing these two new versions of the Sibelius Violin Concerto prompts the question: is it the last of the great Romantic concertos or the harbinger of a darker, more disturbing 20th-century tradition?

Jennifer Pike's account stresses beauty of tone, with elegant phrasing and a smooth, precise technique that makes light of all the virtuoso challenges. She benefits from exceptional recording quality, the violin in natural balance with an accompaniment whose individual instrumental colours appear clearly within the spacious ambience. Augustin Hadelich, by contrast, is closely recorded, with an overall sound that places clarity above creating the impression of a resonant concert hall. His performance, scrupulously following Sibelius's dynamic marks, stresses the almost desperate, passionate character of much of the music; in his intense commitment he reminded me of Camilla Wicks's celebrated 1952 recording. In the finale, his playing has tremendous energy, and though he certainly does not eschew beauty of tone - for instance in the enunciation of the Adagio's melody - one always feels that emotional expression is at the heart of his performance. Jennifer Pike appears a little more detached. It's lovely playing, with a range of expressive colouring, and many of the quieter moments have an evocative power missing in the Hadelich account. But, forced to choose, I'd go for Hadelich; he gives us Sibelius without any gloss or varnish.

As to the other items on the discs: the Bergen recording brings together an attractive programme of popular Sibelius works, directed by Sir Andrew Davis with a sure touch – firm, poised rhythms, sensitive control of balance and texture and, in the more substantial pieces, a strong sense of structure. The Swan of Tuonela is powerfully evocative, with distinguished solo contributions from cor anglais and cello, and the whole orchestra brings real enthusiasm to its account of Finlandia. And the top-class quality of the recording imparts a special magic to Sibelius's orchestral textures.

Augustin Hadelich adapts his style most successfully to the more playful, lighter idiom of the Sibelius *Humoresques*. And he and the Liverpool orchestra give a magnificent performance of Thomas Adès's Violin Concerto, moving dramatically from the bright, penetrating sonorities of the opening movement to the sinister, almost brutal environment of the much longer central movement. At the end of this section the harsh atmosphere begins to mellow, but not for long, as the violin's range is gradually and tragically limited, eventually confined to its two lowest notes.

Duncan Druce

Sibelius Vn Conc – selected comparison: Wicks, Stockholm RSO, Ehrling (A/06) (BIDD) 80218-2

Sibelius

Symphonies - No 6, Op 104; No 7, Op 105. Tapiola, Op 112

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra / Robert Spano
ASO Media (F) CD1004 (70' • DDD)



The opening pages of the Sixth Symphony always sound to me like

we're looking at an illuminated manuscript – a mysterious polyphony that radiates light from within. Robert Spano and his Atlanta Symphony strings achieve that most effectively, only pulling us into some kind of 'reality' once the woodwind and bass-lines come into focus. It's a wellsprung, well-honed and blended sound that Spano encourages throughout this highly original piece but it's also very urbane, even plushy, and even the more elemental pages - like the momentary shadow passing over the first movement in string basses and horns or the lightcatching and highly atmospheric heart of the second-movement Allegretto - sound and feel a touch cosmetic. The scherzo is also too heavy on its feet to fully convey its vivace spirit, its open-aired quality.

In the great Seventh Symphony one always felt with a conductor like the late Sir Colin Davis that the piece was constantly evolving from the bass-lines. Again the word 'elemental' conveys the feeling that this music must convey. Spano's players make something very lovely (and very much akin to the opening of the Sixth) of the passage for solo strings leading to the first trombone invocation. But it feels crafted as opposed to evolved, sculpted as opposed to roughly hewn. The mighty arpeggiated wave of lower strings in the approach to the second climax is impressive and the climax itself resounding, but the intensity of the string chords in its wake stops short of awe-inspiring.

Tapiola should deliver that awe in spades – 'ancient, mysterious, brooding savage dreams' are Sibelius's words. Spano certainly invokes a savage beauty, with flaring horns suggesting the wrath of the forest god himself and a ppp of eerie calm before the ill wind sweeps in. But again, is there too much warmth in this well-engineered sound? Is the cragginess of the Sibelius sound truly captured here? Not for me. This is an excellent orchestra in very safe hands but we are in every sense a long way from Finland.

Edward Seckerson



A long way from Finland: the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and music director Robert Spano take on Sibelius's last two symphonies

AR Thomas



Aureole^a. Carillon Sky^b. In My Sky at Twilight^c. Silver Chants the Litanies^d. Terpsichore's Dream^e. Words of the Sea^f

^cChristine Brandes *sop* ^dGreg Heustis *hm* ^bBaird Dodge *vm* ^dSouthern Methodist University Wind Ensemble / Jack Delaney; ^aDePaul University Symphony Orchestra; ^eChamber Orchestra / ^{ae}Cliff Colnot; ^fChicago Symphony Orchestra; ^{bc}MusicNOW Ensemble / ^{cf}Pierre Boulez; ^bOliver Knussen

Nimbus Alliance (F) NI6258 (80' • DDD) fRecorded live



Despite the steady number of works that have appeared on various labels, Augusta

Read Thomas (b1964) has not had the coverage her large and diverse output warrants, so this first of two discs from Nimbus could not be more welcome. The six pieces offer a viable perspective on her music over almost two decades, with the opening brace of orchestral works underlining the consistency of her thinking during that period. Thus *Aureole* (2013) is a sequence of fanfares both scintillating and evocative as it touches upon more inward

emotions near its close, while *Words of the Sea* (1995) is a symphonic suite recalling the example (not the music) of two underrated post-war American figures – Jacob Druckman and Donald Erb – in its purposeful and virtuoso progress towards a luminous apotheosis.

The other four works all underline the range of Thomas's music throughout the 2000s. In My Sky at Twilight is less a songcycle than a scena whose vocal line binds together the diverse texts as surely as it guides the emotional trajectory of this eventful diptych from speculation to resolution, and Carillon Sky is a succinct violin concerto whose orchestral component similarly feels an extension of the ethereal solo part. Terpsichore's Dream is a study in incremental rhythmic and textural change, gaining all the while in incisiveness and dynamism prior to its blissful close, while Silver Chants the Litanies pursues a more confrontational approach between horn and chamber orchestra that culminates in another rapt epilogue - though here the mood is more equivocal as the music recedes into silence.

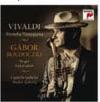
The performances are as persuasive as expected given the involvement of such as Pierre Boulez and Oliver Knussen, while the quality of sound and the extensive

booklet-notes are added enhancements. One can only await Vol 2 of this series with impatience. **Richard Whitehouse**

Vivaldi

'Tromba veneziana'

Concertos - RV93; RV106; RV230; RV522; RV531^a; RV548. II Giustino - Vedrò con mio diletto. Andromeda liberata - Sovvente il sole **Gábor Boldoczki** *tpt/flugelhorn* ^a**Sergei Nakariakov** *flugelhorn* **Cappella Gabetta / Andrés Gabetta** Sony Classical ® 88883 71769-2 (67' • DDD)



Not even in the heady days of Maurice André's voluminous transcriptions of

Baroque sonatas and concertos for Erato (all available apart from a final box with organ) did a recording appear solely dedicated to Vivaldi. Gábor Boldoczki performs eight pieces composed for a variety of string and wind instruments – and purposely leaves out the ubiquitous Concerto for two trumpets, one of the few which the composer originally wrote for the instrument.

Underpinning this enterprising journey is a sprightly and stylish band of modern

instruments to match the fleet-of-everything and even-toned Boldoczki. The two opening works, RV230 and 522, are well-known as Bach solo keyboard transcriptions further purloined for the trumpet; the D major (RV230) is rather more alluringly shaped by Alison Balsom (EMI, 3/03) and yet there is a pleasingly unfussy musical projection in these performances, and the soloist is very much a child of his time with Baroque gesture, shape and ornamentation informing his considerable technical armoury.

What perhaps is missing here is the tingle factor – those moments of heart-stopping melodic beauty (such as 1'39"-2'11" in track 6) where a Maurice André would sail or soar. Boldoczki is often content to stick within the decorum of the given conceit and the slightly boxy studio acoustic doesn't encourage a kaleidoscope of colour change, despite the contrast of trumpet with flugelhorn.

Yet no one can doubt Boldoczki's accomplishment, successfully entering the idiom of these works and with such consistently good taste and judgement. To achieve the beguiling balance and control in the E minor work (from the original G minor double concerto, RV106) takes no little conceptual and practical negotiating. No less effective is the final duo romp for flugelhorns (RV531, from cellos) where the brilliant Russian Sergei Nakariakov joins the fray. A fine and unusual trumpet disc but just a bit short on magic.

Jonathan Freeman-Attwood

Vivaldi

'Concerti per archi II' Concertos for Strings - RV110; RV119; RV127;

RV128; RV134; RV150; RV151; RV157; RV160; RV164; RV166

Concerto Italiano / Rinaldo Alessandrini Naïve Vivaldi Edition © OP30554 (51' • DDD)



Artist biographies do not usually outweigh the essay in booklets for Naïve's Vivaldi

Edition but it is fair to concede that there is not really much one can say about these short 'ripieno' string concertos, many of which last little more than three minutes. Rinaldo Alessandrini's short note eruditely acknowledges that Vivaldi's comparatively overlooked pieces for strings and continuo were probably created for occasions which cannot now be determined; he speculates that they might have been used less like orchestral concertos but perhaps were instead envisaged more like 17th-century

sonatas written in four parts. This chamber-music perspective is certainly nurtured by Concerto Italiano fielding just seven musicians, with single violins and viola on the upper parts but a continuo group including cello, violone, theorbo and harpsichord. Alessandrini writes that the lack of a solo part 'leaves Vivaldi, like all the other composers who have tackled this form, a high degree of freedom...One might say this betokens great economy of resources, but I prefer to define it as a great capacity for synthesis.'

There is an enjoyable variety of moods and rhetorical affect in Concerto Italiano's consistently judicious performances of these brief works. The thrusting E minor figurations of the *Andante* in RV150, the gleeful folk-dance conclusion of RV151 ('Alla rustica'), the inquisitive tone created by subtly shaded fast bowing in the C minor opening of RV119 and the theatrical flamboyance of RV164 are just a few highlights from these imaginatively nuanced and thoroughly convivial performances. **David Vickers**

Vivaldi

The Four Seasons, Op 8 Nos 1-4 **Ensemble Cordevento / Erik Bosgraaf** rec

Brilliant Classics

94637 (40' • DDD)



In December 1987 Gramophone's Edward Greenfield warmly reviewed Michala

Petri's landmark recorder version of Vivaldi's Four Seasons, at the same time making reference to James Galway's flute version a decade earlier. So newsworthy was her recording that Petri also made the cover and was interviewed by Stephen Johnson that month. Then Marion Verbruggen arranged the concertos for five recorders and recorded them with the Flanders Recorder Quartet (2002); Dan Laurin performing with Arte dei Suonatori (2006) and Piers Adams with Red Priest (2009) produced subsequent recorder versions.

Enter Erik Bosgraaf – a musicologist recorder soloist – with a fresh take on this iconic quartet of concertos. Playing instruments of extraordinary beauty made for him by Ernst Meyer, Bosgraaf has assembled his personal corps of ripieno (two) and continuo players (four), Ensemble Cordevento, to record a carefully researched and arrestingly translucent chamber interpretation. In common with Petri and many other artists, he claims to have been influenced by the anonymous

sonnets that appeared in the 1725 Amsterdam edition and are included here in the CD booklet.

That these concertos suit the recorder very well is not in doubt. Listening to Bosgraaf's magical version of the 'Danza pastorale' of Spring or the birdcalls in the first movement of Summer, one can easily argue that the recorder is better able to imitate the sounds of nature than a violin. By using minimal forces for accompaniment he achieves ethereal textures, as in the Adagio of Autumn and the Largo of Winter; my only quibble might be with the unnecessarily intrusive continuo-playing in the Largo of Spring. Elsewhere, the rapport between solo and ripieno forces is simply fabulous. Julie Anne Sadie

Weinberg





Solo Violin Sonata No 3, Op 126. Piano Trio, Op 48. Sonatina, Op 46. Concertino, Op 42. Symphony No 10, Op 98

Gidon Kremer vn Daniil Grishin va Giedrė Dirvanauskeitė vc Daniil Trifonov pf Kremerata Baltica

ECM New Series (M) (2) 481 0669 (101' • DDD)

Weinberg

Symphony No 12, 'In memoriam D Shostakovich', Op 114. The Golden Key - Ballet Suite No 4, Op 55*d* St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra / Vladimir Lande

Naxos (\$\sigma\$ 8 573085 (76' • DDD)





Perhaps you have observed the recent explosion of Weinberg recordings and are wondering whether the pendulum may have swung too far in his favour. Perhaps you have sampled some of the alternative versions in the repertoire on Gidon Kremer's new two-disc set and are doubtful as to whether it's worth the extra outlay. Either way, I can't recommend the new issue too highly. Kremer brings not just his unmistakable wiry sound quality to bear but also a sheer force of musical personality that brings the music off the page in a way that only the greatest Weinberg recordings do (I mean by the likes of Oistrakh, Kogan, Rostropovich, Gilels, Kondrashin, Barshai, the Borodin Quartet and the composer himself; conflict of interest probably prevents me from mentioning my colleagues, the Quatuor Danel).

Even Barshai's superb 1970 recording of Symphony No 10 with his own elite Moscow Chamber Orchestra (in its day on Olympia and Russian Disc) meets its match. This is Weinberg at his most exploratory, even experimental; if you think you hear Schnittke's First Concerto grosso in the background, bear in mind that it was written nearly 10 years later. It needs a performance of unwavering focus, huge range of colour and consummate individual and corporate agility to bring it off. Which is exactly what it gets here.

Kremer himself opens his survey with a masterly account of the Sonata No 3 for solo violin, another of Weinberg's most uncompromising scores. It takes a lot to put the only previous recording, by Victor Pikaizen (Melodiya), in the shade but Kremer manages it; there are two more contenders in the pipeline but they really have their work cut out now.

The other three works, composed during the especially challenging years for Soviet composers from 1948-50, all show the composer's more genial side. Kremer and his colleagues are in tune with that, too, and they tease out the darker shades that give Weinberg's music at this time more durability than so many of his colleagues. Kremer himself is well spotlit throughout but never did I feel that the music was being used to feed his ego. On the contrary, his interpretative daring and technical resources bring out qualities others miss and make each piece more urgently communicative than ever before. Daniil Trifonov's brief but telling contribution leaves me eager to hear more of his evidently starry talent.

All these qualities are conspicuous by their absence from the new St Petersburg account of Symphony No 12. This is Weinberg's tribute to Shostakovich, composed the year after the death of his great friend and idol, and also his longest purely instrumental symphony. Although there are many stirring and a few breathtaking ideas here, they can feel over-stretched in such a worthy but – sorry to say – limp performance (57 minutes, as opposed to Maxim Shostakovich's 52 in his admittedly tough-to-find but sterling version, also once upon a time available on Olympia and Russian Disc). The Suite from the Pinocchio-ballet The Golden Key is jolly enough but again no competition for the rival Gothenburg version. Not a high priority, then, unless you really can't wait for a better alternative in the Symphony.

David Fanning

Golden Key - selected comparison: Gothenburg SO, Svedlund (8/11) (CHAN) CHSA5089

'1930s Violin Concertos' 📵 🚺



'Volume 1'

Barber Violin Concerto, Op 14a Berg Violin Concerto^b Britten Violin Concerto, Op 15c KA Hartman Concerto funebred Stravinsky Violin Concertoe Gil Shaham vn eBBC Symphony Orchestra; ^aNew York Philharmonic; ^bStaatskapelle Dresden / abe David Robertson; Boston Symphony Orchestra

Canary Classics M 2 CC12 (124' • DDD) Recorded live 2008-13

/ Juanjo Mena; dSejong Soloists



If any genre is likely to tap the emotional resources of a great composer, it's the

violin concerto - Vivaldi wrote dozens of them, Bach wrote three masterpieces, and there are the lyrical outpourings of Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, the later Romantics and the 20th-century masters who Gil Shaham is centring on in this laudable enterprise of '1930s Violin Concertos'. And this is just the start: upcoming, with any luck, are Walton, Szymanowski, Schoenberg, Prokofiev, Bartók, Hindemith - and I've even tweeted the suggestion of Arnold Bax, a lovely work that's sorely in need of a benchmark recording. But maybe that's being a little too optimistic.

What first struck me about this initial volume is how Shaham, a fine musician even 20 or so years ago, has matured as a player, his vibrato marginally quicker and more intense than it had been, his sound palette far subtler, less prone to overripeness, his range of expression wider, more sensitive to the rise and fall of a phrase. You sense this immediately in Barber's effusively lyrical Concerto, which Shaham had famously recorded for DG under André Previn. Here, aside from the advantage of a more spontaneous live recording context and David Robertson's animated New York Philharmonic accompaniment, Shaham finds so much more than sweetness and brilliance, diving in and around the pages of the score, musing quietly or listening to his colleagues. He makes large-scale chamber music rather than taking centre stage, and provides a viable alternative to, say, Stern and Bernstein.

The Dresden recording of Alban Berg's gritty but often meltingly beautiful Concerto, captured in warm, fairly closeset sound, is similarly intimate, Shaham, Robertson and the Dresden players between them lending the work a firmly shaped rhythmic profile and, come the appearance of the Bach chorale towards





Gál Symphony No. 1 Schumann Symphony No. 1, "Spring"

Kenneth Woods Orchestra of the Swan

Kenneth Woods and Orchestra of the Swan complete the first-ever recorded cycle of the four symphonies by Hans Gál, pairing the Austrian émigré composer's First with Schumann's exuberant "Spring" Symphony.



Wild Dreams

Bartók • Hindemith • Rachmaninov • Schumann • Wild Joyce Yang, piano

Recognised for her "imaginative programming" and "beautifully atmospheric playing" (Gramophone), pianist Joyce Yang weaves together a sequence of dream-inspired and nocturnal works by Bartók, Hindemith, Rachmaninov, Schumann and transcriptions by Earl Wild.



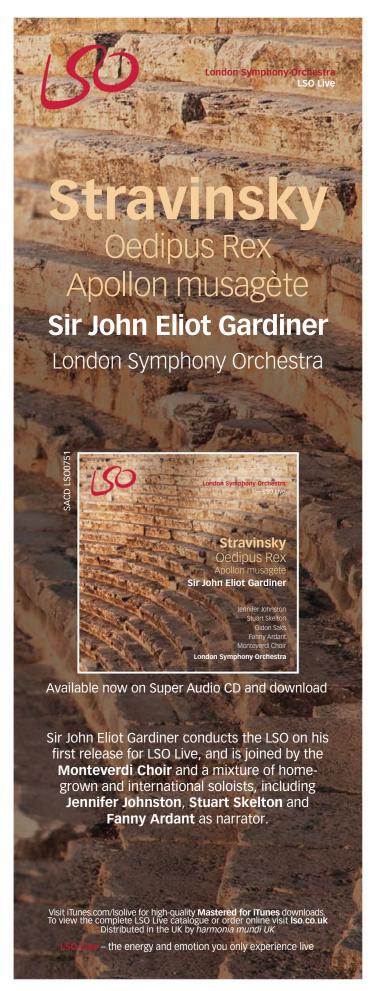
Paganini 24 Capricci

Marina Piccinini, flute

Flautist Marina Piccinini astounds with her virtuosity in her own arrangements of Paganini's devilishly difficult 24 Capricci.







04/02/2014 11:01

GRAMOPHONE Collector

SALZBURG 1962

Rob Cowan travels back in time to the 1962 Salzburg Festival, from which three concerts have been plucked from the archives

hat we have here are three CDs' worth of material dating from a period when commercial recording was improving by leaps and bounds, stereo having come into its own relatively recently and transformed the quality of our listening. These mono tapes from August 1962, all of them mementos of that year's Salzburg Festival and the Berlin Phil's appearances there, hardly compare with the best hi-fi of the day but in performance terms include moments to savour, and plenty of them.

The prize of the series is Verdi's Requiem under Herbert von Karajan, its devotional spirit and, at times, chamber-like intimacy quite unlike any other version available. Except perhaps Ferenc Fricsay's 1960 Berlin broadcast; and it occurred

to me that Fricsay's terminal illness may have sat somewhere at the back of Karajan's consciousness. Had he heard that feted broadcast, I wonder? Or am I being overly fanciful? The opening 'Requiem aeternam' is as rapt as any, while the attention to detail on virtually every page of the score spells fastidious preparation – for example the threatening chord that underpins the word 'responsura' in 'Mors stupebit'. The 'Dies irae' has power to spare, its thunderclap bass drum threateningly present even though the sound quality is relatively constricted. But the real miracle is the singing, superb in itself (Leontyne Price, Giulietta Simionato, Giuseppe Zampieri and, best of all, Nicolai Ghiaurov), but under Karajan a formidable team who know how to sing quietly. Their inward projection is beautifully exemplified in 'Quid sum miser' (Price, Simionato, Zampieri), so exquisitely balanced, the Berlin strings supportively expressive but never overbearing. And the Sanctus is stirring without pushing the tempo,



Salzburg, summer of '62: Karl Böhm joined Karajan, Kempe and the Berlin Philharmonic at the iconic festival

the trumpets at the beginning thrillingly unanimous, marking a maximum contrast with the deeply pious *Agnus Dei*.

By 1962 **Karl Böhm**'s way with Mozart's Symphony No 40 was something of an anachronism, what with its romantically broadened first movement, where the development modulates on the curve of a marked *rallentando*. I love the *Andante*'s expressive ardour, so much akin to late Beecham, while in the finale Böhm pushes for extra urgency and, come the development, slows the tempo significantly, and the rests with it.

Böhm's DG *Also sprach Zarathustra* for years shared top billing with Karajan's VPO version (Decca, 8/59, 5/00) and Reiner's from Chicago (RCA, 2/63, 12/92), and this mono broadcast is conceptually similar to its LP counterpart, its principal virtues the seductively turned violinplaying of Michel Schwalbé, the grumbling blackness at the start of the fugal 'Of Science' and the searing drama of the 'midnight bell' episode ('The Song of the Night Wanderer').

The performance of Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* with Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau is in general more intense than the commercial DG LP by the same artists, and come the rush of tragic emotion in the first song after the words 'musst sie ins ew'ge Licht versenken' ('You must sink [the night] in eternal light'), Böhm and his players really let go, far more so than on their commercial recording.

The highlight of **Rudolf Kempe**'s concert is a warmly glowing account of Mozart's great E flat Symphony (No 39), the Adagio introduction unfolding with dignity and tonal amplitude, the Andante con moto second movement taken at a relatively broad tempo, while the burbling clarinet at the centre of the Minuet adds significantly to the music's charm. Haydn's Symphony No 55, the Schoolmaster, is very nicely done but can't hold a candle to Benjamin Britten's Aldeburgh recording from 1956 (now in Decca's 'Britten: The Performer' set: 478 5672DC27 - 8/00R) for welltargeted wit, most notably in the cheeky second movement, where Britten so vividly conjures a curmudgeonly schoolmaster pacing the classroom aisles, hands clasped behind his back. Beethoven's G major Concerto with Nikita Magaloff comes into its own for the brief slow movement, where Magaloff's evenly weighted chords bring to mind Michelangeli. The finale too is despatched with skill but there are passages in the first movement that sound a mite awkward. Far better to search out Magaloff's 1965 Munich broadcast under Rafael Kubelík which, aside from enjoying a lighter accompaniment, is more fluid, especially in the first movement.

With excellent notes by Richard Osborne and Mike Ashman, these three CDs add significantly to the growing cache of live Berlin Philharmonic recordings featuring conductors of the recent past, in the case of Karajan offering an experience that is down entirely to the performers rather than to a house recording style that could, on occasion, smooth away edges where smoothness was inappropriate. **6**

THE RECORDINGS



Verdi Requiem **Sols; BPO / Karajan** Testament **M** SBT1491



Mahler. Mozart. Strauss Orch Wks Fischer-Dieskau; BPO / Böhm Testament (M) SBT1489



Beethoven. Haydn. Mozart Orch Wks Magaloff; BPO / Kempe Testament (M) SBT1492

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the work's close, touching our hearts with the sheer eloquence of their playing. The orchestra's pooled tone has a burnished, full-bodied quality and excels in all instrumental departments. Hartmann's Concerto funebre, a still under-appreciated masterpiece from an unsung hero whose internal exile during difficult times signalled a man of rare integrity, is performed with passion and commitment by Shaham and the accomplished Sejong Soloists, another recording that has great immediacy. Yes, we do already have fine versions by Thomas Zehetmair and André Gertler but Shaham's recording is easily as good as theirs. Hartmann's heart is nowhere near his sleeve and yet the depth of his concerto, and the skill with which he conveys his gnarled emotions, is cause for wonder.

Britten's precocious early masterpiece is dominated by a striking cadenza at the tailend of its central scherzo and a profound closing passacaglia that's virtually the length of the two previous movements put together. The Concerto's disturbingly ambiguous last minutes are played with great intensity both by Shaham and a notably refined Boston Symphony under Iuanio Mena. Henceforth this should be considered one of the finest versions of Britten's Concerto currently available. In Stravinsky's dapper Violin Concerto, Shaham, Robertson and the BBC SO are at their best in the central 'arias', which are both expressive and pungent, the orchestra enjoying clear, closely balanced sound (especially the trumpets in the first movement), and I love the way the closing Capriccio jumps in just as the second 'aria' finishes. Like the other performances gathered here, it bristles with life. With superb booklet-notes by Claire Delamarche, this is a most distinguished release and I can't wait for the second instalment, with or without Bax.

Rob Cowan

Barber – selected comparisons:

Stern, New York PO, Bernstein
(9/65^R, 2/98) (SONY) SMK63088, SMK89751

Shaham, LSO, Previn (9/94) (DG) 439 886-2GH

Hartmann – selected comparisons:

Gertler, Czech PO, Ančerl (12/72^R) (SUPR) SU3677-2

Zebetmair, Deutsche Kammerphilh Bremen
(3/93^R) (TELD) 2564 68103-1

'The Italian Character' 🔓 😂

'The Story of a Great Italian Orchestra'

A film by Angelo Bozzolini

Orchestra of the Accademia Nazionale
di Santa Cecilia / Antonio Pappano

EuroArts © 205 9388; © ≥ 205 9384

(100' + 12' • NTSC • 16:9 • 1080i • DTS-HD MA5.1,
DTS5.1 & PCM stereo • 0 • s)



'The Italian Character,' reads the DVD's blurb, 'is the story of one of the most renowned orchestras

in the world, enriched by archive material of the last 30 years about the great conductors who have been performing on the most famous stages in Rome.'

With respect to the documentary's director/auteur Angelo Bozzolini, it doesn't do what it says on the tin. If you aim to tell the history of an orchestra, it's a good idea to tell us how and when it was founded, perhaps a mention of its music directors before 1992, and, were one to be quite frank, why it has only achieved international standing since the arrival of Antonio Pappano in 2005. But there is no mention of Bernardino Mollinari, who directed the orchestra after its founding in 1908 from 1912 to 1944, or Fernando Previtali (1953-73). There are archive clips of Giulini and Bernstein, and brief contributions from Valery Gergiev, Evgeny Kissin, Denis Matsuev, Lang Lang and Lisa Batiashvili, who all say what a lovely orchestra it is.

We are told that the documentary 'portrays the planning and performance of a great project, it shows how the sound ripens from the first rehearsal to the final applause of a sold-out music hall.' It doesn't. There are some vivid rehearsal sequences of Brahms's Violin Concerto with Pappano and Janine Jansen but these hardly amount to the claim made in the booklet.

Various orchestra members are seen off-duty (jogging, bee-keeping) and on tour, explaining how they became musicians, their work ethic, national musical characteristics, and revealing their recurrent nightmares (dreams common to all performing artists). Like the star soloists and the music played in the film, they are not identified by name. There are fine tributes to (and a charming interview with) Yuri Temirkanov, but the centre of attention is always and understandably the orchestra's genial musical director.

It's all exceptionally well filmed and edited but what the film reveals about the Italian character beyond what we know already I leave to you to judge. I don't think we learn much by seeing a solitary young trumpeter playing a mournful solo on top of a snow-capped mountain peak or a double-bass player playing her instrument at the bottom of a swimming pool.

Jeremy Nicholas

'Miroirs'

J Christoph Bach Ach dass Wassers genug hätte^a JS Bach Cantata No 170 - 'Wie jammern mich doch die verkehrten Herzen'^a Bacri Lamento, Op 81^a Barber Adagio, Op 11 Shostakovich Chamber Symphony, Op 110*a* (arr Barshai)

^aMalena Ernman *mez*

Ensemble Matheus / Jean-Christophe Spinosi DG (F) 481 0648 (53' • DDD)



When Jean-Christophe Spinosi backed away from his specialty as a

Vivaldi conductor a few years ago, one never envisioned him re-emerging with Shostakovich, or that the hair-trigger contrasts that make his Vivaldi thrilling would lend themselves to the abrupt, collage elements of Shostakovich's Chamber Symphony Op 110*a*, the centrepiece of this disc. The deeply introspective, low-vibrato performance distinctively conveys a sense of a world flying apart in all directions in a sort of hallucinatory slow motion.

With all of the penetrating recordings of Rudolf Barshai's transcription of the Eighth String Quartet (written in the aftermath of 1945 and intended as a memorial to himself as well), this recording's main appeal is the way the piece is sequenced, framed by lamentations from distant places and eras that have a previously unsuspected near-family resemblance.

Barber's Adagio for strings begins the disc with a high-intensity reading that never capitalises on the music's potential prettiness. On each side of Shostakovich is the JC Bach aria *Ach dass ich Wassers genug hätte*, while Nicolas Bacri's newly composed *Lamento* uses the same text and generally expands emotionally on the latter piece. The disc's atmosphere of sombre ritual is underscored by its postlude, 'Wie jammern mich doch die verkehrten Herzen' from JS Bach's Cantata No 170.

Malena Ernman's somewhat androgynous mezzo-soprano makes three vocal appearances, all of them in a spirit of unbearable sorrow, amid a thoroughly convincing emotional arc, especially for those who can't get enough of similarly brooding discs, such as Górecki's Symphony No 3. Personally, I found myself longing for some of Spinosi's more chipper Vivaldi. Sorry.

David Patrick Stearns



$\overline{TESTAMENT}$



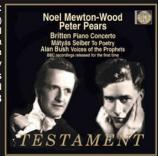
www.testament.co.uk

New CD releases for Early 2014



Britten: War Requiem Previously unreleased BBC recording of the World Premiere performance recorded in Coventry Cathedral, May 1962 Peter Pears · Heather Harper Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra Meredith Davies Melos Ensemble / Benjamin Britten **SBT 1490**

Britten: Piano Concerto (revised version) **Noel Mewton-Wood** London Symphony Orchestra Basil Cameron Seiber: To Poetry **Bush: Voices of the Prophets** Peter Pears · Noel Mewton-Wood **SBT 1493**





Karl Böhm Mozart: Symphony No.40 Mahler: Kindertotenlieder R. Strauss: Also sprach Zarathustra Giuseppe Zampieri · Nicolai Ghiaurov Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau Berliner Philharmoniker SBT2 1489 (2 CDs at a reduced price)



Herbert von Karajan Verdi: Messa da Requiem Leontyne Price · Giulietta Simionato Berliner Philharmoniker **SBT 1491**



Rudolf Kempe Haydn: Symphony No.55 Beethoven: Piano Concerto No.4 Mozart: Symphony No.39 Nikita Magaloff Berliner Philharmoniker **SBT 1492**

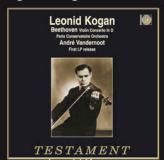


Carlo Maria Giulini Verdi: Messa da Requiem Joan Sutherland · Fiorenza Cossotto Luigi Ottolini · Ivo Vinco Philharmonia Chorus & Orchestra SBT2 1494 (2 CDs for the price of 1)

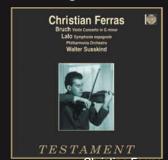
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'A lone voice on a huge plain'

Jennifer Pike talks to Hannah Nepil about Sibelius's Violin Concerto

Jennifer Pike, as we pore over the score: 'It's a soul that has been here forever. It's as old as the earth.' Pike was 17 when she first performed the concerto – four years after becoming the youngest ever winner of the BBC Young Musician of the Year award. Now, at 24, she has recorded it for the first time, with Sir Andrew Davis and the Bergen Philharmonic. Youth, in her opinion, need not be an obstacle to grasping this work's essence: 'I think it's possible to play what sounds like older person's music when you're young. It's difficult to put a formula on these things,' she says. 'I've now developed a stronger interpretation of the piece but that instinctive connection was there from the start.'

The concerto's technical hurdles are, of course, legendary. 'Sibelius was a violinist and he had wanted to be a soloist. So there is a sense of letting all that out here,' Pike speculates. The 1904 premiere stretched violinist Viktor Nováček far beyond his capabilities, provoking a range of biting remarks from his audience ('From time to time there were terrible sounds', wrote one critic). A year later Sibelius produced a leaner score, with altered orchestration, that placed less strain on the soloist. The original edition was soon supplanted; save for a recording and performance from Leonidas Kavakos in 1991, it is not played. 'I got the music just to have a look at it,' Pike discloses, 'and it's crazily difficult'.

'Some people do go very fast as if it is just a virtuoso showpiece. But if it sounds like a bullet going past, that's missing the point'

Even the revised version is notoriously demanding: there are those who believe that the composer compromised musical depth – usually a Sibelius trademark – in favour of virtuosity for its own sake. 'But from my point of view,' says Pike, 'he's nailed it'. She recognises Brucknerian features in the music: it's Romantic yet adheres to Classical structures and, as she points out, there are 'tremolos, brass chorales and pedal-points all over the place. It makes me want to approach this piece in quite a purposeful way and to think that just because it's a 20th-century work, I'm not going to push it and take liberties with it.'



Jennifer Pike: she first performed Sibelius's Violin Concerto at the age of 17

Such thought processes inform her approach to the opening bars. Pike emphasises the importance of maintaining 'rhythmic integrity', noting the minute distinction between the semiquavers and demi-semiquavers, and taking care not to cut the long-held notes short. 'The rhythm plays an important role in setting up the foundations of the piece. If you take too many liberties you've lost the soul: this icy cold feeling,' she says. 'I tried to approach it like you would Brahms or a Classical composer, taking care over the rhythmic details.'

For her, the first theme – like much of the piece – conjures up images of landscape: 'It's like a lone voice on a huge plain.' Sound quality here is crucial, she tells me, pointing to her violin, a 1708 Goffriller. 'It's perfect for this piece,' she says, 'It has this earthiness on the G-string, an amber, cello-like quality. And a lot of this piece is in the lower register. I spent



The historical view

Willy Burmester Violinist, letter to Sibelius, 1904 (following the unsuccessful premiere by Victor Nováček)

All my 25 years' stage experience, my artistry and insight will be at the service of this violin concerto...I shall play the work in Helsinki in such a way that the city will be at your feet.'

Deutsche Zeitung Berlin, 1905

The colours of the concerto were reminiscent of the Nordic winter landscape painters who through the distinctive interplay of white on white, secure rare, sometimes hypnotic and sometimes powerful effects.'

Karl Flodin Helsinki critic of Nya Pressen, 1906

'Even in its revised form the concerto will not, I think, win wide appreciation...it is far too complex, far too busy, dark and dingy, rhapsodic in spite of its tauter form, and above all, it is laden with technical and rhythmic difficulties.'

a long time figuring out how to capture that sound in recording. It's easier to project on stage, from a distance.'

At figure 2 (track 1, 2'30"), the music heralds the entrance of the soloist's second main theme, providing scope for contrast. 'This piece can be interpreted as totally bleak and dirgey but there is joy in it,' says Pike. 'I've tried to make a difference here and make it sound more loving.' Very different challenges characterise the soloist's long unaccompanied passage, at figure 6 (6'51"), where a glance at Pike's score reveals a sea of pencilled annotations and scribbles. 'At first, it just looks like a long narrative, but it can be interpreted in a huge number of ways,' she says. 'The challenge is the phrasing; to put the grammar into it, and to know where the silences are.' Nevertheless, Pike revels in the boldness of the writing: the 'primal cry' of the violin as it leaps up three octaves just before figure 6; the way that Sibelius makes the instrument sound like several voices at once through his use of double-stopping.

As the soloist's opening theme makes its haunting return (9'38"), familiarity reigns – but not entirely: some of the accents are gone, as well as the little *crescendos*. 'It feels more at peace with itself now; less agitated than before,' Pike comments, 'as if it's now reminiscing.'

The slow movement provokes one of Pike's most vehement declarations: 'This is often performed at an excruciatingly ponderous speed. But although it's *adagio*, I don't think it should be in eight: it needs direction. There is life in it.' We are now, Pike implies, experiencing a tension between two opposing forces: on the one hand, the sense of 'an immovable landscape', evoked, for example, by the strings' syncopated repetitions in the approach to figure 1 (track 2, from 1'57"); on the other, the 'humanity' of the soloist's part, 'like a voice, straining against the immovable nature, with all those swells in it'. She relishes the movement's 'heart-on-sleeve' intimacy, as well as its innovative effects, such as the final passage, when the violin plays with a brass ensemble (6'46"). 'You don't often get to do that as a solo violinist,' she says.

The musicologist Donald Tovey famously likened the third movement to a 'polonaise for polar bears', which may not sound flattering, but Pike has a positive spin: 'This isn't a flashy, throwaway end to the piece. It has a weight to it. Some people do go very fast as if it is just a virtuoso showpiece. But if it sounds like a bullet going past then that's totally missing the point.' She stresses the importance of articulating the opening rhythmic figuration in the string parts ('it's very exciting when it's played quite incisively, and not with a nonchalance') and of leaning into the syncopations in the *tutti* after figure 2 (track 3, 1'21"), to bring out their 'ritualistic' flavour.

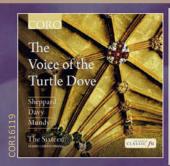
Indeed, many of Pike's comments concern not her preoccupations as a soloist, but the intricacies of the orchestral parts: she recalls tackling the piece as a member of her school orchestra, and marvelling, even then, at its scoring. 'It's a very symphonic work,' she says. 'As the soloist, you really feel that you're having a conversation with the orchestra.' In this final movement, she delights in the sudden changes of colour, for example at figure 4 (2'29"), when the violinists are reduced to a few players 'and the texture becomes suddenly more icy'.

And she happily admits to enjoying the *tutti* sections in her numerous bars' rest. 'It's one of the privileges of performing this particular concerto,' she says. 'As the soloist you get the best seat in the house.' **G**

▶ To read Gramophone's review of Jennifer Pike's Sibelius, turn to page 66

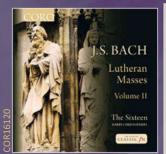


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Chamber



Guy Rickards on the latest in a flurry of Hindemith recordings:

Ermert's playing shows formidable dexterity, and a clarity and accuracy of tone that is a match for her rivals' > REVIEW ON PAGE 80



Jeremy Dibble listens to Stanford's complete violin-and-piano works:

'A more than satisfying summation of an idiom in which Stanford excelled – highly recommended' > REVIEW ON PAGE 82

Arensky · Rachmaninov

Arensky Piano Trios - No 1, Op 32; No 2, Op 73
Rachmaninov Vocalise, Op 34 No 14 (arr Conus)
Leonore Piano Trio

Hyperion (F) CDA68015 (73' • DDD)



This is the seventh in Hyperion's series of Arensky discs, beautifully erasing

Rimsky-Korsakov's write-off (for him, Arensky was doomed to oblivion). Above all, here is music for all those who weary of grappling with the complexities of contemporary works to rejoice in an all-Russian fountain of melodic charm, embroidered with an alternating full and delicate tracery. True, as the admirable booklet-note has it, there are 'accents of regret and melancholy' never far below the surface of such riches, though Arensky wears such colouring more lightly and less engulfingly than Rachmaninov (his early D minor Trio) and less intensely than Tchaikovsky. Such shadows are swept aside in the scintillating Scherzo of the First Trio and returned to once more in the thirdmovement 'Elegia' before being erased in a finale of a robust and endearing eloquence.

The less familiar Second Trio in F minor is not so easily accessible as the First, less clearly structured and with a distinct advance in its greater sense of adventure. This time the second-movement 'Romance' precedes the *Scherzo*, alive with a heart-easing melody before the *Scherzo* once more flashes with summer lightning, particularly from the pianist. The finale is an ambitious set of variations, though with a quiet and magically sustained conclusion.

The Leonore Piano Trio then add as their encore an arrangement for trio of Rachmaninov's 'Vocalise' by Julius Conus (1869-1942), a close friend of the composer who was also a student of Arensky – an ideal tying-up, as it were, of related themes and threads. The Leonores play with truly glorious affection and security, and it is hard to imagine playing of a greater

empathy. Balance (there is no artificial highlighting) and sound are ideal.

Bryce Morrison

Beethoven

Piano Trios - No 6, Op 70 No 2; No 7, 'Archduke', Op 97 Isabelle Faust vn Jean-Guihen Queyras vc Alexander Melnikov fp Harmonia Mundi ® HMC90 2125 (68' • DDD)



Nannette Streicher's new piano was a sixoctave godsend for Beethoven. And the

next year, 1808, he ran the full gamut from the F three octaves below middle C to the one three octaves above it – in Op 70 No 2. The lowest note first appears at 1'10", three bars before the end of the introductory Poco sostenuto, but Alexander Melnikov doesn't make much of it. Lefthand reticence? Or is he a touch backwardly placed? Either way, his bassline doesn't always speak clearly, but comes into its own in the C minor variations of the second movement and an authoritative finale. Otherwise his leadership varies. Often he leaves Isabelle Faust and Jean-Guihen Queyras to compensate in conceptually a large-scale interpretation. Of course, changes in levels and instrumental balance even within movements don't help.

Concept comes closer to reality in Op 97, though a piano that regularly shifts position between centre and right is an added distraction. Yet Melnikov is in greater command both of harmonic undertow and his role in the partnership. Tempi are swifter than expected in the first three movements but only in the third, *Andante cantabile ma però con moto*, is a shortfall in profundity really felt. If the inexplicable – and damaging – decision to omit the long repeat in the *Scherzo* is a lapse, the finale offers a high point in its ideally judged *Allegro moderato*, the coda a fierily charged *Presto*. In sum, a curate's egg. Nalen Anthoni

Op 70 No 2 – selected comparisons: Haydn Trio Wien (8/87^R) (APEX) 2564 61533-2 Trio Wanderer (7/12) (HARM) HMC90 2100/3 Archduke Trio – selected comparison: Roscoe, Cropper, Welsh (5/12) (SONI) SON11102

Berg · Schoenberg

Berg Lyric Suite
Schoenberg Verklärte Nacht, Op 4
Ensemble Resonanz / Jean-Guihen Queyras vc
Harmonia Mundi ® HMC90 2150 (58' • DDD)



Composers can increase exposure – and income – by promoting orchestral

versions of chamber compositions. But orchestras usually employ conductors; and when the arrangement is of a score with many textual intricacies and shifts of tempo, the challenges to conductorless ensembles are formidable.

That hasn't prevented some very successful recordings in this repertory, as with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra in the early years of CD. Ensemble Resonanz describes its principal cello, Jean-Guihen Queyras, as 'artistic director' and any quarrels one might have with these performances are in the sphere of interpretation. The playing is unfailingly distinguished and well-balanced texturally, allowing for the degree to which the recording offers extremes of dynamics that might not be apparent in a live acoustic. It's one of those things that the disc appears so soon after the outstanding version of Schoenberg's tone-poem by the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra under Heinz Holliger (ZZT, 2/14). The 22 players of Ensemble Resonanz are polished to a fault but less successful at conveying the full rawness and intensity of the music's dramatic profile. Is it the absence of a controlling baton that creates a sense of collective restraint at points where a conductor might opt for something more forceful?

As for the *Lyric Suite*: Berg himself arranged the second, third and fourth

movements for string orchestra, and Theo Verbey's versions of the remaining three work well. The performance can scarcely fail to reflect something of the original score's intimate expressiveness but here again a degree of gentility, of seeking out lyricism at the expense of drama, affects the result. Arnold Whittall

Biber

Fidicinium sacro-profanum

Ars Antiqua Austria / Gunar Letzbor vn

Challenge Classics © CC72575

(47' • DDD/DSD)



First-class recordings of Biber's *Mystery* (*Rosary*) *Sonatas* are hardly rarities but

there are fewer sets of Fidicinium sacroprofanum (Les Plaisirs du Parnasse or the Purcell Quartet's broader survey spring to mind). The collection of 12 sonatas was printed in Nuremburg in 1683 (Gunar Letzbor's engaging and personal essay gets the facts right but Challenge Classics inexplicably prints 1682 several times). The first half of the collection is set in five parts, for two violins, two violas and basso continuo, realised on this occasion by violone, archlute and keyboard; the second half of the collection dispenses with the second violin and confines itself to fourpart polyphonic textures in which the florid double violas play a vibrant part.

Ars Antiqua Austria have laboured at Biber's 'sacred-profane fiddling' for 25 years until eventually deciding that their interpretations were ready for this compelling recording. Playing from a facsimile of the original publication, the spirited allegros during Sonata II in F major offer zesty panache but never at the expense of clarity, and elsewhere there are judicious contrasts, such as compelling storminess (the agitated climax to Sonata III in D minor), battling assertiveness (the rapid dotted passage that ends Sonata V in C major), exquisite gentility (the conclusion to Sonata IV in G minor) and convivial sunniness (the Italianate opening of Sonata X in E major). Sometimes slow minor-key passages are loudly exaggerated where softer understatement might have served the music better, although the chromatic central Adagio in Sonata XII in C minor has melancholic poignancy.

David Vickers

Selected comparisons:
Plaisirs du Parnasse, Plantier (ZZT) ZZT080701
Purcell Qt (CHAN) CHAN0605

Boulanger · Debussy · Hindemith

Pieces^b **Debussy** Violin Sonata^c. Scherzo^b **Hindemith** String Trio No 2^d

^cAlina Ibragimova, ^aWanzhen Li, ^dChristian

Tetzlaff vns ^dVolker Jacobsen va ^dBartholomew

LaFollette, ^bGustav Rivinius, ^aTanja Tetzlaff vcs

^bAnna Rita Hitaj, ^aGunilla Süssmann, ^cLars Vogt pfs

AVI-Music © AVI8553295 (64' • DDD)

Recorded live at the Hydroelectric Plant RWE

Power AG, Heimbach, Germany, June 2012

L Boulanger Two Piecesa N Boulanger Three



I have a confession to make. Hindemith's music really makes me angry. Not just

mildly irritable but full-blown chucking-scores-at-the-speakers annoyed. It just doesn't go anywhere – the music that is (I'm an unerring shot with the scores). So I'm afraid that 22 minutes of this CD gave me no pleasure at all, even though his Second String Trio is played with great energy and spirit by Christian Tetzlaff, Volker Jacobsen and Bartholomew LaFollette.

But the remainder of the disc is a typically eclectic and imaginative souvenir of Lars Vogt's 2012 Spannungen chamber music festival, one in which the quality of the programming is absolutely matched by the quality of the performers. The Boulanger sisters were arguably the most talented siblings of the last century and the tragically short-lived Lili is one of the great 'what ifs' in musical history. Her Two Pieces consist of the darkly ominous 'D'un soir triste' (in which it's difficult to avoid the notion that she was anticipating her own death) and the rather lighter-toned 'D'un matin de printemps', which has a fantastically dramatic ending and which is brought off superbly. What's so striking is how much her own person she already is here, even seeming to foreshadow Messiaen in places. By comparison, the 20-year-old Debussy had yet to find his own voice when he wrote his Scherzo for cello and piano.

We encounter the mature Debussy in the Violin Sonata, completed the same year (1917) as Lili Boulanger's pieces. There's a wonderful crispness in the playing of Ibragimova and Vogt but at times (particularly in the central movement) I wanted a little more Gallic sensuality, though they judge the wistful close to a nicety and the finale sparkles to great effect. We tend to think of Nadia

Boulanger more as a great pedagogue than as a composer in her own right, yet her Three Pieces for cello and piano are assured and very effectively written, if perhaps lacking the individuality of her sister's music. Harriet Smith

Bowen

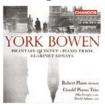
Clarinet Sonata, Op 109^a. Rhapsody Trio, Op 80^b. Piano Trios^b - Op 118; Unfinished. Phantasy Quintet, Op 93^c

Robert Plane ac/cbc/cMia Cooper vn

*David Adams va bcGould Piano Trio

(aBenjamin Frith pf cLucy Gould vn cAlice Neary vc)

Chandos © CHAN10805 (78' • DDD)



The revival in fortune (in the recording studio, at any rate) of the consistently warm-

hearted and delectably polished music of York Bowen (1884-1961) has been a remarkable one, and this exceedingly generous chamber anthology from Chandos will surely win plenty more new friends for the composer.

It opens with the Clarinet Sonata that Bowen wrote for Pauline Juler (1914-2003) in 1943, a wonderfully mellifluous, skilful and compact piece which finds Robert Plane and Benjamin Frith operating at the very top of their game. Plane also shines (this time on the bass clarinet) in the uncommonly resourceful and cleverly paced Phantasy Quintet that Bowen penned probably during 1933. Three works for piano trio complete the feast. Finished on New Year's Day 1926, the Rhapsody Trio in A minor captivates in its soaring lyricism and keen lucidity, its raptly poetic outer sections intriguingly suggesting rather more than a passing acquaintance with Herbert Howells's contemporaneous chamber output. Another single-movement offering, dating from around 1900 and all that remains of a projected piano trio in D minor, shows what prodigious gifts the teenage Bowen already possessed. Most impressive of all, however, is the E minor Trio, Op 118: first given at Wigmore Hall on April 4, 1946, by the Harry Isaacs Trio, it's an impeccably crafted, singularly cohesive and formidably fluent affair that yields durable rewards with each new hearing.

I need only add that the Gould Piano Trio and friends perform all this enticing repertoire with matchless understanding, and they have been afforded glowingly realistic sound by the Chandos production team. Not to be missed.

Andrew Achenbach

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Going French: members of Florilegium trade Bach and Telemann for Couperin and Rebel on their new disc for Channel Classics

Brahms · Piazzolla · Stravinsky

Brahms Sixteen Waltzes, Op 39 **Piazzolla** Four Tangos (arr Bax/Chung) **Stravinsky** Petrushka **Bax & Chung Piano Duo**

Signum (F) SIGCD365 (68' • DDD)



Pardon the cliché, but here's a husbandand-wife piano duo who make beautiful

music together. In Stravinsky's duet reduction of *Petrushka*, Alessio Bax and Lucille Chung do not attempt to replicate orchestral dynamic levels. Instead they apply their effortless synchronicity to unlocking the music's pianistic potential, aiming for textural clarity and colouristic variety as they shape the catchy melodies with maximum lilt and characterful accentuation.

Newly minted colours, inner voices and highlighted bass-lines emerge from Brahms's Op 39 Waltzes with minimum sustain pedal and maximum tonal imagination. True, they hold back in Nos 5 and 14, while *ritards* at phrase-ends and cadences grow increasingly predictable, as do No 11's arch *tenutos*. Yet felicities

abound, as in No 5's uncommonly animated tempo and whimsical changes of voicing on the repeats, No 8's gently sweeping long line (too many duos bear down on each down-beat) or the graceful reserve of Nos 7 and 16.

Although the smoky underpinnings of Piazzolla's tango idiom usually lose their edge via classical interpreters, Bax and Chung internalise this composer's rhythmic syntax to the point where syncopations pack an understated punch and curvaceous melodies offhandedly slip by in the manner of a master actor who knows how to throw away a good line. As I listened to Libertango's sultry introductory pages unravel, its tempo increase, and the finale's peroration whirl about with the utmost in controlled ardour, I wished that Piazzolla had been alive to hear it as well. Superb annotations and engineering make the Bax/Chung duo debut CD all the more auspicious. Jed Distler

F Couperin · Rebel

F Couperin Les nations - Première Ordre; Deuxième Ordre Rebel Les caractères de la danse



The superb early-18th-century chamber music of François Couperin and Jean-

Féry Rebel – and a number of their French contemporaries – still languishes just out of the limelight, in spite of a steady trickle of fine recordings over the past quarter of a century. Perhaps this new disc by Florilegium will awaken greater interest.

Florilegium's stylish performances are accented with English reserve. In both the Couperin (the Sonate of 'La Françoise' in particular) and the Rebel, Ashley Solomon opts for slow tempi in the opening movements; but once past the introductions, the performances are cordial and occasionally even jocular, thanks in part to David Miller's gently swaggering lute accompaniments. In each work, the chaconne or passacaille enchants.

Also at issue is the decision to use only flute and strings in the Rebel – no doubt a practical decision. The printed score calls for oboes and bassoon as well (Les Musiciens du Louvre added percussion in their 1993 recording – Erato, 11/93 – nla). Les caractères de la danse is something of a

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party piece: a short but delightful compendium of French danses that flow seamlessly from one to the next, composed to accompany a solo dancer. In this chamber version, Florilegium's harpsichordist Terence Charlston takes a brief solo turn in the Menuet, Solomon in the Sarabande and violinist Bojan Čičić in the Gigue.

Well known for their recordings of Bach, Telemann and Vivaldi, Florilegium are making only their third recorded foray into the French Baroque repertoire. A further sortie might well take in Montéclair's 1697 *Sérénade*, a masterplan for French Baroque instrumentation so far unavailable on CD. Julie Anne Sadie

Finnissy · Grieg

Finnissy Grieg Quintettsatz Grieg Piano Quintet (compl Finnissy) Roderick Chadwick pf Kreutzer Quartet Métier (§ MSV28541 (60' • DDD)



Michael Finnissy is Mr Complexity, whose crunchy five-hour piano cycle *The History*

of Photography in Sound was reviewed in Gramophone's January issue. But this disc reveals another side of Finnissy. His Grieg Quintettsatz is a passionately composed love letter in sound to Edvard Grieg, written – Finnissy says 'for fun' – shortly after his stylistically faithful completion of the Piano Quintet in B flat major which Grieg put to one side as he began to revise Peer Gynt in 1892. Grieg would never touch his sketches again; Finnissy picked them up in 2007 and both projects were complete by 2012.

It's unlikely that Finnissy will become known as the composer of Grieg's Piano Quintet in the same way that Anthony Payne is the composer of Elgar's Third Symphony. Each note could, in theory, have been etched by Grieg's own pen, but I doubt whether he would have shaped them into this unbroken 30-minute structure. Finnissy keeps an objective distance from the material at the same time as being utterly immersed within it. Describing the resulting sonic capriccio as a 'Kammersymphonie', Finnissy's dimensions project these abandoned relics into the future; Schoenberg, yes, but also Bruckner, Wagner and Mahler.

I've written before about Finnissy's canny knack of devising miniatures that just happen to last 30 minutes, and hearing him work that same trick under the guise of another composer is indeed attentiongrabbing. Even with my workaday

knowledge of his music, I can hear just how fertile the potential of this material must feel to a confirmed Grieg aficionado; and, harmonic muscles flexed, Finnissy takes it on a power workout, his structure ambling urgently towards a folksy, cascading *scherzo* and an introspective, wistful slow movement, both invented, before a recapitulation of Grieg's original material.

The Kreutzer Quartet and pianist Roderick Chadwick play the game, an authentic mode of 19th-century expression that refuses to acknowledge its genuine fakeness; but in *Grieg Quintettsatz* you're just waiting for that moment of stylistic slippage, for Finnissy not just to project but to take this material into the modern world. Progress is glacial; but of all a sudden you glance back and realise you're in another gestural world, a world of distorted scale and far-flung harmonies informed, Finnissy tells us, by John Cage and David Hockney. Philip Clark

Hindemith

Solo Cello Sonata, Op 25 No 3. Cello Sonata, Op 11 No 3. Three Pieces, Op 8. Variations on 'A frog he went a-courting' **Judith Ermert** *vc* **Daan Vandewalle** *pf*Fuga Libera (F) FUG713 (64' • DDD)



Up until now, Wendy Warner's programme for Bridge of the essential Hindemith

chamber pieces for cello has been by some distance the finest available – featuring all bar the 'Little' Sonata (1942) – with Martin Ostertag's survey, part of MDG's sevenvolume survey of all 42 Hindemith sonatas, a fine alternative. With this newcomer, matters become a touch more complicated.

Ermert and Vandewalle's focus is on the early pieces, so they omit the Third Sonata (1948), substituting instead the *Drei Stiicke*, Op 8 (Warner only included the first piece, Capriccio). Interestingly, both Ermert and Warner place the unaccompanied Sonata Op 25 No 3 early in their programmes, with the delightful variation set on 'A frog he went a-courting' (which is rendered here as well as either rival), and close with the heavyweight Op 11 No 3 (MDG feature it in numerical position with Op 11 Nos 1, 2 and 4).

Ermert's playing shows formidable dexterity, and a clarity and accuracy of tone that is a match for her rivals, helped by superb sound. She displays an audible empathy for the repertoire, though tempo choices are a touch too broad in Op 11 No 3; Warner and Buck catch its

expressionist volatility with compelling ferocity (with Ostertag and Randalu close behind). Ermert and Vandewalle seem too measured, portraying the emotion rather than feeling it, perhaps. In the late-Romantic Op 8 set, they catch the changeability of the music very nicely indeed (and are fleeter of foot in the Capriccio). Ultimately, Warner remains first choice; but if your focus is the earlier works, Ermert is an excellent choice.

Guy Rickards

A frog he went, Sonatas, Capriccio, Op 8 No 1 – selected comparison:

Warner, Buck (BRID) BRIDGE9088

Op 11 No 3 – selected comparison:

Ostertag, Randalu (MDG) MDG304 0691-2

A frog he went – selected comparison:

Ostertag, Randalu (12/97) (MDG) MDG304 0697-2

Korngold · Schoenberg

Korngold Piano Trio, Op 1 **Schoenberg** Verklärte Nacht, Op 4 (arr Steuermann) **Fidelio Trio**

Naxos (§) 8 572758 (61' • DDD)



This must be a unique coupling. Schoenberg's irrefutable masterpiece

continues to prosper in the studio: standard recommendations would include the augmented Hollywood Quartet's debut recording of the work in its sextet form (Testament, 4/94), the opulent string orchestra version by Herbert von Karajan's Berliners (DG, 3/75) and the bracing historically informed challenge of Kenneth Slowik's Smithsonian Chamber Players (DHM, 2/97 - nla - and Dorian). There have even been several stabs at the present reduction for piano trio, although I am not sure how often one would want to revisit the score in a transmogrification that so tames it however idiomatic the rewrite. Eduard Steuermann's treatment dates from 1932, a decade after the private musical performances with which the composer was involved in Vienna and Prague, and the booklet-note, very detailed on the substance of the music (which is perhaps as it should be), does not throw much light on why the transcription was undertaken. The arranger, himself a Schoenberg pupil and collaborator, was a pedagogue, composer and highly accomplished pianist whom older readers may remember in the latter guise. Uncle of the conductor Michael Gielen, he had Hollywood connections via his sister (who co-wrote screenplays for Greta Garbo) and her son, the writer Peter Viertel, who married Deborah Kerr.

Which brings us neatly to the Korngold Piano Trio. His first published composition, it attracted the advocacy of Bruno Walter (as pianist) with violinist Arnold Rosé and cellist Friedrich Buxbaum - young Erich was nothing if not well connected. It is an amazing piece to have come from the pen of a boy of 12 yet, even if his proto-Hollywood idiom had arrived almost fully formed, the yearning lyricism and not-quite Straussian harmonic spicing there from the start, it seems a little cruel to pair these works. The diffuse recording, more cathedral than palm court, suits the Schoenberg better than the Korngold, whose crisper pianistic novelties are badly smudged. Nor is string tone much flattered, edginess blighting higher-lying passages. The Fidelio Trio may be committed exponents of the Korngold in concert but the efforts of Glenn Dicterow, Alan Stepansky and Israela Margalit (last featured in physical format on an EMI Gemini twofer) are more deftly focused.

David Gutman

Korngold - selected comparison: Dicterow, Stepansky, Margalit (7/95R) (EMI) 217650-2

Korngold

Sextet, Op 10a. Suite, Op 23b Aron Quartet with aThomas Selditz va ^aMàrius Diaz vc ^bHenri Sigfridsson pf CPO (E) CPO777 600-2 (68' • DDD)



It is an inspired idea to couple these two contrasting works, separated as they were

by momentous events. Korngold's Sextet for strings (1916) was a late flowering of Austrian romanticism from Imperial Vienna, while the Suite for two violins, cello and piano left hand (1929) was written for the pianist Paul Wittgenstein, who lost his right arm in the Great War, the conflict that had led to the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

The Viennese musicians of the Aron Quartet meet the challenge of these complex and highly strung pieces head-on. In the first movement of the Sextet, the abrupt mood-swings and restless tonality, typical of the adolescent Korngold, hold no fears for any of these players as they maintain the continuity of the movement with precision of ensemble through a number of testing passages. These musicians were born to play the Viennese café music reflected throughout the string of waltz tunes in the Intermezzo. In the

finale, a rondo with variations, they relish the masterly display of scoring and musical antics of this outdoor music, more akin to Sherwood Forest than the Vienna woods.

In the Suite, the pianist Henri Sigfridsson commands attention from the start, throwing down the gauntlet in an elaborate cadenza that almost defies belief that it could all be coming from the left hand. This Praeludium, with its classical allusions and contrasting moods, gives way to the 'Walzer', a haunted ballroom scene, then a 'Groteske', a diabolical scherzo. An impassioned 'Lied' brings us to a rondo finale where the model of Franck's Piano Quintet hangs in the air: after an introductory flourish from the pianist, the cello leads off with a simple tune followed by a playful and light-hearted set of variations. The Aron Quartet give a commanding performance, very well balanced between piano and strings.

Adrian Edwards

Langgaard





'String Quartets, Vol 2' String Quartets - No 4, 'Sommerdage' ('Summer Days'), BVN215; in A flat, BVN155. Rosengaardsspil (Rose Garden Play), BVN153 Nightingale Quartet

Dacapo (F) 6 220576 (68' • DDD/DSD)



The Nightingale Quartet's first volume of Rued Langgaard (6/12) brought to

attention a quartet output which, though not unknown, was largely unrecognised in its scope and depth. This second instalment focuses on works with direct (though varying) links to the summer the then 20-year-old composer spent at the Rosengården house in the southern Swedish village of Kyrkhult, marking his first amorous encounter and the last occasion that he holidayed with both parents.

Such experiences are embodied in two of the three quartets he completed in 1918, especially Rose Garden Play, whose four movements are far from formally orthodox. The Nightingale duly underline this with a perceptive take on the alternate joy and pensiveness of the 'Interior' first movement, the deft intercutting of verve and grace in the scherzo-like 'Mozart', the mood of sustained melancholy in the 'Drop Fall' slow movement that is among Langgaard's most affecting utterances, and the renewed resolve - albeit tempered by passing doubt - of the 'Rococo' finale.

Heard just twice before and only now receiving its first recording, this is a highly impressive reading of a work anticipating Janáček's quartets in sheer emotional acuity.

The A flat Quartet is music of greater poise and restraint, qualities that the members of the Randers Chamber Orchestra emphasise a little too readily in its only previous outing on disc. By comparison, the Nightingale more forcefully bring out the opening Allegro's bracing and never supine classicism, as also the scherzo's incisive contrapuntal interplay. The Lento is appreciably swifter, its pizzicato episodes given greater rhythmic flexibility within the plaintive rather than funereal context of the movement overall, thereby putting greatest emphasis on the finale, with its central span of aching remembrance placing the surrounding decisiveness in greater relief. A winning account of a work whose standing outside the numbered series can only have hindered its progress: indeed, a whole-scale renumbering of the eight full-length quartets is not merely feasible but also desirable.

The Fourth Quartet is actually the last in the sequence, created in 1931 by placing revised versions of Rose Garden Play's outer movements either side of the recomposed scherzo from the First Quartet (to be included on Vol 3). The result only stresses the music's emotional retrospection, as do the Nightingale when compared to the Kontra Quartet's more overtly extrovert approach - whether in the opening movement's now more easeful progress, the scherzo's whimsical unfolding or the finale's more potent uncovering of its material's essential fatalism - suitably reinforced by a yearning slow introduction which returns transformed in the conclusive yet regretful coda. Interesting that Langgaard chose the Summer Days subtitle in 1950, having earlier opted for Lacrimetta or 'Little Tear' - as if looking back two decades had brought home the promise that might have been.

The quartet is heard to advantage in the detailed yet spacious Concert Hall of the Royal Danish Academy of Music, while Bendt Viinholt Nielsen's notes are highly informative. One can only look forward to the final release in this important and worthwhile series.

Richard Whitehouse

Ot in A flat – comparative version: Randers CO (DACA) 8 224139 Qt No 4 - comparative version: Kontra Qt (DACA) DCCD9302

For an in-depth feature on these works and interviews with the Nightingale String Quartet, visit gramophone.co.uk/features

Lucier



No Ideas But In Things - The Composer Alvin Lucier

A film by Viola Rusche and Hauke Harder
Wergo ⊕ ₩ MV08095 (97' • NTSC • stereo • 0)





Standing by a piano, holding a teapot – and with an impish glint in his eye that is unmistakably

reminiscent of Tony Bennett – the American composer Alvin Lucier is telling Viola Rusche and Hauke Harder, the producers of this documentary about his life and work and ideas, a story. 'I once asked an architect how much it would cost to build a concert hall with a roof that could lift on and off,' Lucier says, before pausing for comic effect with timing worthy of a stand-up. 'Millions of dollars!' comes the retort – as if, darn it, who would be silly enough not to design a concert hall with a peel-off roof allowing sound to radiate out into the surrounding environment.

I've always admired and enjoyed Lucier's music very much, and seeing first hand what a loveable old gent he is, all whimsy, wit and wisdom, is very heartening. The teapot is trademark Lucier. In the second half of his piece Nothing is Real, a small speaker is placed inside a teapot to amplify fragments of The Beatles' 'Strawberry Fields forever' which he has played on a piano and recorded. And depending on the carefully notated positioning of the teapot lid against the inside of the piano, melodies drift to the surface as the sound of the piano finds itself sucked up through the teapot. Elsewhere we see him using a birdcall toy, walking around a room and aiming to provoke frequency interference beats against a hanging microphone; the birdsong takes flight when the beats vibrate most strongly, and it's as if Luicer is communing with the animals.

His totemic sound-art piece *I am sitting* in a room – Lucier sitting in a room recording his voice which is continually replayed into the room, thus revealing the resonant properties of that room – punctuates the film, and quickly it becomes clear how fundamentally Lucier has redefined what it is to be 'a composer'. Electronics are his portal into capturing the nature of sound and he draws an analogy with the sound of a stream, which is expressively beautiful even if the stream is not trying to be 'self-expressive'. He signs off by quoting the American poet William

Carlos Williams: 'Don't ask me what I'm trying to say, ask me what I made', which about sums it up – so I'll leave it at that.

Philip Clark

Schubert

String Quintet, D956 **Kuss Quartet** with **Miklós Perényi** VC

Onyx

OnyX
ONYX4119 (56' • DDD)



Another month, another Schubert C major Quintet. For any new version to

make its mark it has to be pretty special. The recent Quatuor Diotima/Gastinel reading was full of character but was let down by a sluggish slow movement. The Kuss Quartet are joined by the distinguished Hungarian cellist Miklós Perényi and there's very a much a sense of him being an integral part of the group, overcoming the hurdle that the Takács failed to surmount with Kirshbaum.

Pulse is all-important in all Schubert, nowhere more so than in the extended works of his final years. That's something that the Pavel Haas/Ishizaka performance judges to a nicety, with each phrase clearly part of the bigger picture. In this new reading, the pulse feels less consistent because the phrasing tends to be more segmented. Some groups slow down (wrongly) for the second theme of the opening Allegro; the Kuss don't but there is a suspicion that the tempo has already flagged somewhat because of that lack of a consistent pulse. Similarly, at the start of the slow movement (which is, happily, not too slow), the pizzicato second cello line is bent just enough towards the close of the phrases to make it sound as if the music is dragging its heels. By contrast, the Pavel Haas set the tone for this extraordinary movement purely through the phrasing of the first violin and the result is much more natural.

The Kuss are more compelling in the *Scherzo*, a heady combination of energy and earthiness, and their colours in the Trio form a fine contrast. There's angst aplenty in their finale, the swinging gait gaining a slightly desperate edge in their hands. But, again, there's a tendency to think in small phrases, notwithstanding some elegant contrasts in the Viennese-tinged second idea. It means that by the closing pages they haven't managed to build up to a sense of being on the edge of the abyss to the same degree as the Haas reading, making for a less shatteringly intense musical experience. Harriet Smith

Selected comparisons:

Takács Qt, Kirshbaum (12/12) (HYPE) CDA67864 Pavel Haas Qt, Isbizaka (10/13) (SUPR) SU4110-2 Diotima Ot, Gastinel (2/14) (NAIV) V5331

Stanford

'Complete Works for Violin and Piano' Violin Sonatas - No 1, Op 11; No 2, Op 70. Three Intermezzos, Op 13. Legend. Album-leaf. Six Irish Dances. Five Bagatelles in Valse-Form, Op 183. Six Irish Fantasies, Op 54. Five Characteristic Pieces, Op 93. Three Irish Airs. Three Irish Dances, Op 89. Six Irish Sketches, Op 153. Six Irish Marches. An Ancient Melody. Planxty Sudley. Six Sketches, Op 155

Alberto Bologni *vn* **Christopher Howell** *pf* Sheva Collection § ③ SH100 (3h 40' • DDD)



There have been, in the last 20 years or so, a number of recordings of

Stanford's music for violin and piano. Susanne Stanzeleit and Gusztáv Fenyő produced a fine recording of the First Violin Sonata in 1994 (together with works by Bantock and Dunhill - Cala United, 7/96) which was reissued on Regis in 2011. Paul Barritt and Catherine Edwards (piano) recorded both violin sonatas, the 'Caoine' from the Six Irish Fantasies, Op 54, and the Five Characteristic Pieces, Op 93, in 1997-99 (Hyperion, 7/99), now available at budgetprice, while Lucy Gould and Benjamin Frith have recorded the Legend and two movements, the 'Jig' and 'Hush Song', from the Irish Fantasies (Naxos, A/11). This is the first time, however, that all of Stanford's works for the combination have been issued on a set of three thoughtfully organised CDs, by the Sheva Collection label with an Italian violinist and an English pianist.

Alberto Bologni and Christopher Howell give spirited readings of the two solo sonatas, which are strategically placed on the first and third CDs respectively. The first movement of the Op 11 First Sonata in D has an infectious momentum and, in the imaginative variation structure of the second movement, a pleasing character and sense of contrast. In the longer Op 70 Second Sonata in A, both performers respond to the richer and more lyrical demands of the score, Bologni with a fuller, passionate tone, Howells in the more opulent piano part.

Though the two sonatas are strong works, I am nevertheless especially drawn in this recording to the wealth of miniatures, many of them recorded here for the first time. It is particularly nice, for



Loving Langgaard: the Nightingale String Quartet in session with their producer and mentor Tim Frederiksen (review on page 81)

example, to hear the familiar Intermezzos, Op 13, so beloved of clarinettists, in the violin adaptation which the composer sanctioned, and well it sounds. The rather Celtic Legend has much fine music, as does the euphonious and somewhat melancholy Album-leaf. The Six Irish Fantasies, Op 54, here complete for the first time, reveal much fertile invention in an Irish idiom, not least the quirky 'Boat Song', the 'Jig' as a miniature variation form and the sonorous lullaby of the 'Hush Song' (a real gem for muted violin), though Gould's interpretation has, marginally, a greater sense of yearning. The Op 89 arrangements of three of the imaginative Irish Dances are great fun (not least Bologni's gossamer artificial harmonics in the 'Leprechaun's Dance') and take on a new character from their original piano version. It is also surely time that the Five Characteristic Pieces, Op 94, such beautifully crafted and by no means insubstantial movements, were better known.

All the smaller violin works written between 1918 and 1923, which tell a story of Stanford's need to earn money through the amateur market (he was hard up both during and after the war), are first recordings. Many of them are highly attractive, as are the unpublished *Ancient Melody* and *Planxty*

Sudley. In toto, therefore, these three CDs provide a more than satisfying summation of Stanford's creative output for an idiom in which he excelled. Highly recommended.

Jeremy Dibble

Telemann

Concertos - TWV52: e1; e2; e3; G1; G2; TWV53:D5 **Rebel / Jörg-Michael Schwarz** Bridge (B) BRIDGE9421 (60' • DDD)



Those who think that Telemann was a skilful, formulaic Baroque note-spinning

concerto machine need to hear his music played by Baroque experts who are skilful enough not to be formulaic note-spinners, like the Dutch ensemble Rebel, who offer a provocative bill of fare containing six mixed wind and string concertos. These are vibrant, colourful musicians who are not afraid to spike conventionally sweet textures with hot pepper, or to roughen up edges that others smooth out.

To better illustrate what gives Rebel's performances their distinction, let's do comparison taste tests. Take the *Presto* finale of the G major Concerto for two

violins with Reinhard Goebel/Musica Antiqua Köln (DG), a clean, suave, somewhat square, dynamically uniform performance whose basic tempo slightly slows down as the music progresses. Rebel's harder-hitting, more dynamically contrasted interpretation jacks up the tempo several notches and digs into the repeated-note theme with more forceful accents. In the E minor Concerto for traverso and violin, the second movement's pizzicato string accompaniment is beautifully contoured against the sensitive soloists in Chandos's recording with Simon Standage and Collegium Musicum 90 (4/92). Rebel's musicians opt for a slower tempo that allows the soloists and ensemble more informally interactive wiggle-room, with plenty of melodic rejoinders from the harpsichord continuo. After hearing the D major Trumpet and Violin Concerto with warm-toned virtuoso brass players like Ludwig Güttler (Berlin Classics) and Otto Sauter (Brilliant Classics), the thinner sonority of David Kjar's natural trumpet at first seems like nothing special. Listen further, however, and you'll notice an uncommon equanimity between the trumpet and violin protagonists. A stimulating and superbly engineered release, highly recommended. Jed Distler

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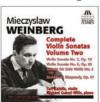
2 CD 481 0669



I am sitting in a room: Alvin Lucier records his sound-art piece of that name for Viola Rusche and Hauke Harder's film 'No Ideas But In Things' (review on page 82)

Weinberg

'Complete Violin Sonatas, Vol 2'
Violin Sonatas - No 2, Op 15; No 5, Op 53.
Solo Violin Sonata No 2, Op 95.
Rhapsody on Moldavian Themes, Op 47 No 3
Yuri Kalnits vn Michael Csányi-Wills pf
Toccata Classics (F) TOCC0026 (71' • DDD)



Although it bears little resemblance to that of Shostakovich, the music of

Mieczysław Weinberg nevertheless expounds similar values: the grim conditions in which it was conceived, its folk influences and the mercuriality of its emotional states. Where they differ fundamentally is in the sensitivity with which they present that condition. Whereas Shostakovich's music is often born out of black depression, Weinberg presents a melancholy that is easier to reach. The terseness of the cultural references in all the works here is brought out with honest intensity by the Moscowborn violinist Yuri Kalnits and British pianist Michael Csányi-Wills, whose performance is very much one of musicians who carry the music in their blood.

That said, there is some beautiful melody which, from the standpoint of a listener new to Weinberg, doesn't always break out of the texture like rays of sunshine as it could. There is sometimes a sense that the playing is too sinuous for the delicateness of the melody; and in not retreating enough, the changeability that feels like the key to much of this music is lost, placing it too close to Shostakovich's door than it should be. This is only in the slightest bit frustrating because over the course of the disc there is interpretation of this music that feels absolutely complete in its authenticity - it is entirely possible to hear the love and affection Kalnits in particular feels for the music. Caroline Gill

'British Rhapsody'

Bowen Phantasy, Op 54 **Coates** First Meeting (Souvenir) **Delius** Violin Sonata No 2 (arr Tertis) **A Richardson** Rhapsody **R Samuel** Blythswood **Su Zhen** \vee *a* **Simon Lepper** p

Stone Records © 5060192 780352 (56' • DDD)



This disc, on the everenterprising Stone label, brings together an attractive collection of rare viola music by British composers. It is not always realised that Eric Coates, famed for his light orchestral pieces, favourites as signature tunes, wrote chamber pieces like this trifle, *First Meeting*, a simple, tuneful piece here played in its original viola form. The Scottish composer Alan Richardson, best known as an academic, wrote this Rhapsody for his viola-playing fellow Scot, Watson Forbes; it is a charmingly varied piece in sharply defined sections, some revealing a Scottish folk element.

Lionel Tertis transcribed his friend Delius's Second Violin Sonata for viola when he wanted to record it back in the 1920s. It was one of the composer's last works before syphilis struck him blind, and in this viola form it was approved by the composer. It emerges here fresh and attractive, beautifully laid out for the instrument, with a charmingly jaunty motif typical of the composer.

The Welsh composer Rhian Samuel (*b*1944) wrote her three evocative pieces *Blythswood* inspired by a holiday she had staying in the Scottish Highlands. Brief as they are, their expressive range is wide, with the first ending in a whisper and the last building to a huge climax, powerfully caught by the artists here.



NEW RELEASES



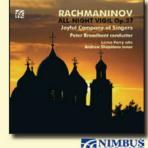
'I found this disc very moving... Raphael Wallfisch plays with an intensity that seems to be even greater than his other concerto recordings, while the orchestral playing and recording is exceptionally vivid. This is music whose melodies and colours can be greatly appreciated with repeated listening, where the music also becomes more directly affecting. It is very highly recommended.'

Ben Hogwood

Raphael Wallfisch, cello Bloch Schelomo • Voice in the Wilderness Benjamin Wallfisch, conductor BBC National Orchestra of Wales Caplet Epiphanie Ravel Kaddish



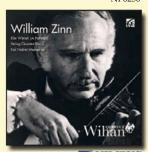
Mozart Works for Orchestra The Hanover Band Roy Goodman, director NI 7093 [2 CDs] Mid Price



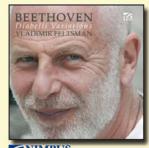
Rachmaninov All-Night Vigil Op.37 Joyful Company of Singers Peter Broadbent, conductor NI 6250



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William Zinn **Works for String Quartet** Wihan Quartet NI 6256



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The *Phantasy* of York Bowen, in some ways the most powerful piece on the disc, won first prize in 1918 in the competition organised by WW Cobbett, with the intention of popularising the one-movement 'phantasy' form as devised by the Elizabethans. This inspires the composer to write viola music of a virtuoso brilliance, splendidly played by Su Zhen and Simon Lepper in this well-recorded Stone disc.

Edward Greenfield

'Sonic Philosophy'



'Colour and Effect'

Economou Arjuna's Transfiguration Marmén Waiting Messiaen Thème et variations Pärt Fratres Purcell A New Ground, Z T682 (plus improvisations) Schnelzer Apollonian Dances Takemitsu Hika Webern Four Pieces, Op 7 Hugo Ticciati vn Henrik Måwe pf Orchid © ORC100038 (65' • DDD)



With its high-flown title and highly abstract bookletnotes, some listeners

might be put off from sampling this album. However, I'd urge them to try it: Ticciati and Måwe have successfully reinvented the traditional violin-and-piano recital, with its succession of contrasting short pieces interspersed with one or two more substantial items. Tying together the programme is a series of improvisations on a Purcell ground (performed, we're told, without prior consultation). The ground is the one that appears in the ode *Welcome to all the Pleasures*, and the plan seems to be to allow its features to emerge gradually from free improvisation.

The whole programme is splendidly performed, demonstrating the duo's imaginative daring. I'd single out the Messiaen and the Webern (the music I know best): these show the uncompromising approach to tempo, dynamics and precise tonal quality that bring these composers' works vividly to life. The intensity of the return of the theme in the Messiaen is overwhelming, as is the observance of Webern's extremely slow tempi and barely audible phrases. Of the three recent pieces, Johannes Marmén's is the most radical; its unusual effects, such as the extremely slow, extended, downwards glissando and its restricted number of different pitches, result in a work that grabs the attention. Arjuna's Transformation moves from an explosive opening through lyricism to

a remote, spaced-out conclusion, whereas *Apollonian Dances*, in a clearly tonal idiom, reinvents the violin-and-piano showpiece in modern terms, most obviously in the second dance's virtuoso cadenza. Strongly recommended. **Duncan Druce**

C

'Il violini boemo'

F Benda Violin Sonatas^a – L III-15; L III-124 F Benda/CH Graun Violin Sonata, L III-107/ GraunWV B.XVII.56 Gurecký Violin Sonata 'fatta li 2 Agosto 1736'^a Jiránek Violin Sonatas – Jk28; Jk29

Lenka Torgersen vn Václav Luks hpd ^aLibor Mašek vc

Supraphon (F) SU4151-2 (63' • DDD)



For this recital, Lenka Torgersen and her colleagues bring together three

18th-century violinist-composers born in what is now the Czech Republic. Charles Burney, travelling through the region in the 1770s, remarked on its abject poverty but was struck by the intense musicality of its inhabitants. This combination may well explain why these three musicians all sought to further their careers abroad. František Benda, older brother of Georg, the pioneer of German stage music, eventually achieved a secure job at the court of Frederick the Great; his sonatas in B flat and C minor appear to me the outstanding works on the disc. His elegant, decorative style finds an admirable exponent in Torgersen, whose warm, mellow tone is combined with a totally convincing feeling for idiomatic ornamentation. (Benda, I know, left fully ornamented versions of some of his sonatas, and I'd love to learn how much of what we hear is invented by Torgerson.)

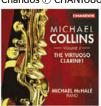
The A major Sonata, an adaptation for violin of a flute sonata by one of Benda's composition teachers, is a suave, attractively melodious work. The sonatas by Jiránek and Gurecký are all pleasing but more conventional and restricted in their ideas. The Gurecký is quite showy - full of trills, which Torgersen executes with supreme ease and clarity. The Jiránek sonatas, with charming concluding movements in lighter style, seem to me quite close in style to the Haydn of the early string trios, though without Haydn's touches of genius. Altogether, it's a fascinating recital, with exceptional playing.

Duncan Druce

'The Virtuoso Clarinet, Vol 2'

Debussy Première Rhapsodie Widor Introduction et Rondo, Op 72 Bernstein Clarinet Sonata Milhaud Duo concertant, Op 351 Pierné Canzonetta, Op 19 Martinů Sonatina, H356 Muczynski Time Pieces, Op 43 Rabaud Solo de concours, Op 10

Michael Collins c/ Michael McHale pf Chandos (E) CHAN10804 (70' • DDD)



Michael Collins and his pianist Michael McHale present us with a programme of

pieces all expertly written for the clarinet, and very entertaining too. With the exception of Debussy's *Première Rhapsodie*, better known in its orchestral guise, these pieces rarely feature in recitals or auditions, though four of them were written for exam purposes.

The Debussy sets the benchmark for what follows. The duo are alive to every nuance of this lovely piece, which Pierre Boulez has described, in its orchestral dress, as hovering between reverie and scherzo. Collins, playing a Yamaha clarinet, brings his customary warmth, playfulness and a wide range of tone to this work, as he does to the whole programme, whether drawn from the salon or of more serious intent. The Bernstein Sonata looks a bit dry on paper - Copland remarked it was 'full of Hindemith' - yet these players so enjoy the contrast of academia and entertainment it presents, though Collins does ignore a quadruple piano marking in the first movement. The cheeky Duo concertant by Milhaud goes with such an irresistible swing – likewise the playful Canzonetta by Pierné – that you want to jump up and applaud.

The Sonatina (1956) by Martinů reflects the composer's native Bohemia and the New World, where he had been domiciled since 1941. A polka crops up amid more contemporary dance rhythms in the typically buoyant first movement. Robert Muczynski, who was brought up in Chicago, composed his four Time Pieces in 1983; they all spotlight the clarinet's chameleon characteristics in music imbued with the pulse of the big city. The 10 brief sections of the slow movement run like a film score, episodic and in black-and-white images. The finale is a real virtuoso turn, an arresting challenge before the players turn to the unpretentious bravura of the Solo de concours by Rabaud. This CD has been planned with great care, taking the listener from one enticing piece to the next in sheer delight. Adrian Edwards

gramophone.co.uk GRAMOPHONE APRIL 2014 87

Jeremy Nicholas looks back at the irrepressible personality and phenomenal musicianship of an American organist who introduced vast new audiences to the world of organ recitals

o many in organ circles and the wider classical world, Fox was a step too far. Who was this vulgar American with his frilly cuffs, red satin-lined cape – a cape, for heaven's sake! – with organ shoes studded with rhinestones, who drove a pink Cadillac and called everyone 'honey'? Almost as bad, he actually talked to the audience and gave an exuberant whoop of delight after finishing a performance of a work by Johann Sebastian Bach of all people. Beyond the pale. Then there were those who referred to him as 'the Liberace of the organ' – meaning it as a compliment. They could not have been wider of the mark in terms of musicianship. Fox might be more accurately described as 'the Horowitz of the organ'.

Fox was the first audience-friendly organist, determined by whatever means to open up the privacy of the organ loft to the public – both visually and musically. For those to whom an organ recital was something they would never think of attending or an experience to be endured rather than enjoyed, Fox introduced cameras and screens for those locations where the organ was hidden from view. And he made the dull-sounding words of toccata, prelude, fugue and passacaglia exciting and vivid for many who had never before heard a note of the solo organ repertoire.

Born in Princeton, Illinois, Virgil Keel Fox (1912-80) was a child prodigy who was playing the organ for church services from the age of 10 and gave his first recital to an audience of 2500 in Cincinnati when he was 14. He studied with Wilhelm Middelschulte, organist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and later with Marcel Dupré and Louis Vierne in Paris (though his greatest love was Bach, Fox excelled in the French repertoire). During the War he gave more than 600 recitals to raise money for the armed forces. Then, from 1946 to 1965, he was organist of the Riverside Church, New York, playing a 10,561 pipe Aeolian-Skinner organ built especially for him and on which most of his recordings were made.

Fox was a flamboyant populariser who put up the backs of those whose first concern was to preserve the hallowed reverence of their narrow little world and ensure that organ recitals be kept as hair-shirt as possible. In the 1970s he mounted the first of his famous 'Heavy Organ' concerts, touring the United States for nine years with an electronic Rodgers Touring Organ and later a custom-built Allen Organ, recitals often accompanied by a Scriabinesque light show. Young people in particular flocked to these in their thousands – he would sometimes play complete recitals of Bach, embellishing the works with a romantic extravagance – making the occasion something akin to a rock concert.

In lighter repertoire he could be saccharine and milk an already sentimental number by adding an extra dollop of syrup ('Love's old sweet song', 'A perfect day'), but on those recordings when he is more Wurlitzer than Willis, there is an emotional sincerity which, if you can let down your guard, is

powerfully moving. Conversely, Fox could never be accused of adopting cautious tempos in virtuoso repertoire. Sometimes he overdid it – Widor's Toccata in 4 minutes 23 seconds robs the piece of its majesty and the Middelschulte 'Perpetuum mobile' (from Concert on a Theme of 7S Bach) for pedals alone, a Fox signature piece, often passed in a blur of fancy footwork. Yet even when in overdrive or being stylistically anachronistic (Bach's Prelude and Fugue, BWV532, the Allegro from Handel's Concerto, Op 4 No 4), one can't help gawping at the sheer technical panache. For whether or not you can live with the lapses of taste, no one can dispute Fox's near-miraculous technique and memory (he had total recall of some 250 works and, unusually for an organist, never played from a score). His repertoire ranged from Boyce, Bach and Handel to Mendelssohn, Brahms and Reubke, from LPs of favourite carols and hymns to arrangements of Clair de lune and 'To a wild rose', from Daquin, Franck and Vierne to Duruflé, Dupré and Jongen. Fox's performances of the latter's *Symphonie concertante* with orchestra and in his own astonishing solo arrangement (both on YouTube) are unlikely to be surpassed.

Virgil Fox was only 68 when he died from cancer on October 25, 1980. The 100th anniversary of his birth on May 3, 1912, passed almost unnoticed. **G**

THE ESSENTIAL RECORDING

'The Art of Virgil Fox, Vol 2'

Organ works by Bach, Middelschulte, Beethoven, Vaughan Williams, etc

Virgil Fox org

EMI M 659132-5



DEFINING MOMENTS

•1931 – Organ scholar

Fox becomes the first organist to win a full scholarship to the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore.

•1941 – Recording debut

He records his first commercial releases for RCA on the Chapel Organ at Girard College.

•1946-1965 - On the job

Organist of Riverside Church, New York

•1970 – Attracting new audiences

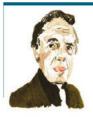
He performs the first 'Heavy Organ' concert at the Fillmore East, a rock venue in New York City.

•26 September 1980 – A grand finale

Fox's last public performance as soloist in Saint-Saëns's *Organ* Symphony and Poulenc's Organ Concerto with the Dallas Symphony Orchestra.



Instrumental



Bryce Morrison on Colin Horsley's 1950s recordings newly unearthed:

'He reminds you of the menace that can engulf even Rachmaninov's most gentle and melancholic musings' > REVIEW ON PAGE 92



David Fanning on Ewa Kupiec's disc of Lutosławski for piano:

'She offers sharply articulated, colourful performances with just the right amount of metal in the tone' ► REVIEW ON PAGE 92

Alwyn · Carwithen

Alwyn Fantasy-Waltzes. Funeral Rites for the Death of an Artist. Bicycle Ride. Piece for Piano. Sonata alla toccata. The Weather Vane Carwithen Sonatina

Mark Bebbington pf

Somm New Horizons (F) SOMMCD0133 (73' • DDD)



Though William Alwyn is best known for his film music from the early

post-war period, as a pianist he wrote a quantity of music obviously designed for himself to play in relaxed mood. Mark Bebbington nicely captures that mood in his survey here, and adds for good measure the delightful Sonatina written early in her career by Doreen Carwithen, who later became Alwyn's wife, and from then on devoted herself to helping her husband with all the necessary chores that an active composer has to undertake.

Perhaps the most impressive of the Alwyn works is the set of 11 Fantasy-Waltzes, divided into two sections. The first six are deliberately light, often in an almost skittish grazioso manner. They end with an Allegro giocoso which brings some showy glissandos sliding down the keyboard. The last five are in a slightly grittier idiom, including a couple of deeply reflective waltzes before the final showpiece waltz, which makes a brilliant conclusion. The genre pieces are simply squibs, clearly designed as encores in a recital – five pieces lasting just over four minutes.

The Carwithen Sonatina makes one wish that she had continued to compose more after her marriage. Its jaunty first movement is followed by a reflective *Adagio* and a *moto perpetuo* finale, *Allegro molto* – music to charm the ear. Altogether a valuable collection of music otherwise neglected, beautifully played and recorded.

Edward Greenfield

JC Bach

Six Keyboard Sonatas, Op 5, T338/1 **Bart van Oort** *fp* Brilliant Classics © 94634 (56' • DDD)



Very popular was the 'London Bach', his combination of stile galant and Italian

forms zestfully received. Four years after arriving in 1762 he produced the Op 5 Sonatas for the Pianoforte (fortepiano? square piano?) or Harpsichord. But Bach, 'who observed the law of contrast as a principle' (Charles Burney), even extending the Alberti bass pattern to the treble, probably preferred the newer instrument.

Bart van Oort doesn't make much of its inherent possibilities in the first four sonatas. Dynamics, always *forte* or *piano* with a single *crescendo* (in the *Tempo di minuetto* of No 1), are played down – notably so in the second movement of No 3, a theme and variations marked *Allegretto*. Van Oort glosses over the very rapid swings from loud to soft in the second part of the theme and at his chosen tempo garbles the semiquaver triplets in Vars 3 and 4. Repeats aren't always logical either.

Paradoxically, van Oort is comfortable with the absence of any dynamics in the last two sonatas. And options are artistically chosen, scintillating rather than aggressively inflexible in the opening Allegro assai and closing Prestissimo of No 5, the moderator used in the Adagio to enhance an expressively undulating line, an invitation for a cadenza at the third fermata accepted. Shades of Empfindsamkeit probably inherited from CPE Bach are heard too, markedly so in No 6, the most substantial of the set (all three movements are in C minor, a striking fugue in the middle preceded by another invited cadenza) and eliciting the finest interpretation.

Nalen Anthoni

JS Bach

Six Keyboard Partitas, BWV825-830 Virginia Black pf CRD ® ② CRD35312 (144' • DDD)



Although Virginia Black is a leading harpsichordist, she now goes back to her

roots by recording Bach's Six Partitas on a modern concert grand. In essence, she sounds like a seasoned harpsichordist playing the piano, not unlike one who speaks a foreign language clearly and fluently, yet not idiomatically, and with a noticeable accent.

As a result, characteristics of Black's harpsichord technique get lost in translation. For example, her use of finger legato and agogic stresses in the First Partita's Praeludium and Gigue does not tap into the piano's capacity to articulate sustained and detached phrases through dynamics and tone colour. In faster movements featuring busy ambidextrous contrapuntal intricacy, Black tends to focus on the right hand while playing left-hand lines on top of the keys, without comparable firmness or direction, as in the D major Gigue, C minor Rondeau, A minor Fantasia and G major Praeambulum. In the A minor Corrente, long rapid lines do not consistently conclude with their initial energy and specificity, not unlike a person speaking to you who looks away just before finishing a sentence.

However, Black's intimate style sometimes yields arresting results. I find her terse introduction to the E minor Partita's opening Toccata refreshing in its lack of rhetorical grandiosity, as well as the headlong, no-nonsense treatment of the middle section. The Gavotta, by contrast, is lilting, relaxed and gorgeously inflected. And for more successful equanimity between hands, listen to the A minor Allemande's carefully sculpted lines, which unfold with a sense of air between the

notes. I have no doubt that the more comfortable Black becomes in the piano's skin, the more her deep-rooted harpsichord experience will enhance her Baroque piano interpretations. She'd be dynamite in Rameau.

Jed Distler

JS Bach

'Organ Masterworks, Vol 4'
Chorale Partita, 'O Gott, du frommer Gott',
BWV767. Chorale Preludes - Allein Gott in der
höh sei Ehr, BWV663; Allein zu dir, Herr Jesu
Christ, BWV1100; Erhalt uns, Herr, bei deinem
Wort, BWV1103; Herr Jesu Christ, dich zu uns
wend, BWV709; Wo soll ich fliehen hin, BWV694.
Fantasia and Fugue, BWV537. Fantasia
(Concerto), BWV571. Passacaglia, BWV582.
Preludes and Fugues - BWV547; BWV549.
Sonata, BWV1017 - Adagio

Kei Koito org

Claves © 50 1314 (75' • DDD)

Played on the Arp Schnitger organ of the Martinikerk, Groningen, Netherlands



Kei Koito's Bach discs are characterised by several distinctive features. On the plus

side are intriguing programming, which usually includes at least one work in her own arrangement (in this instance it is a movement from the Fourth Sonata for violin and keyboard) and outstanding recorded sound on an organ of exceptional quality. Less welcome, but equally distinctive, are Koito's incessantly detached playing and her tendency to superimpose ornaments where you least expect them.

This programme is built around C tonality, with three large C minor works set alongside a handful of chorale preludes generally associated with Trinity, a couple of oddities (which enlarge the tonal landscape by being in G and E flat) and ending with the 'great' C major Prelude and Fugue. It works better than it should, largely because of the sumptuous sound of this 1691-92 Arp Schnitger organ - recorded here in pretty near demonstration-quality sound - which Koito exhibits with some delicious registrations; the Speelfluit and Cornet chosen for Allein zu dir, Herr Jesu Christ produce about the most enchanting organ tone I can ever remember hearing. But, while in the Passacaglia Koito's strongly driven, deliberately detached delivery nicely underlines the music's dance origins, the Fugue of BWV549 (English organists of a certain vintage will know this as the 'Uncle Joe has lost

his trousers' one) seems in constant danger of tripping over its ornaments.

Chorale-based works cry out for that loving touch only a willingness to embrace *legato* can bring – the opening stanza of the Partita on *O Gott, du frommer Gott* lumbers along like a jogging walrus – while the BWV1017 transcription has difficulty just pointing itself in the right direction. There is, however, something gloriously exhilarating about Koito's strongly purposeful account of BWV547, which provides the climax to a disc of uneven treasures. Marc Rochester

Beethoven

'Piano Sonatas, Vol 5'

Piano Sonatas - No 2, Op 2 No 2; No 6, Op 10 No 2; No 14, 'Moonlight', Op 27 No 2; No 16, Op 31 No 1; No 18, Op 31 No 3; No 22, Op 54; No 28, Op 101

Christian Leotta pf

ATMA Classique (F) (2) ACD2 2490 (152' • DDD)



Volume 5 of five two-CD sets completes Christian Leotta's cycle of Beethoven's

32 piano sonatas. He will shortly have played the sonatas 15 times in public; and even in a fiercely competitive marketplace his devotion to his task shines with an exceptional musicianship.

Generally speaking, he reminds us that in Italy, the land of operatic glory, pianists tend towards an aristocratic approach, one which scorns undue idiosyncrasy or heavily personalised gestures. And so it is that in the opening movement of the Moonlight Sonata, his flowing Adagio allows for a subtle coloration and inflection as natural as it is pensive and subdued. Indeed, such is the fine balance between sense and sensibility that you may well find yourself listening afresh to this familiar masterpiece. He probes to the very heart of the Largo from Op 2 No 2 and his gentle rather than aggressive sparkle in the following Scherzo ensures that nothing is pushed beyond its natural limit.

He can also break out into the light, showing a robust humour in the finale of Op 10 No 2, as also in the finale of Op 31 No 3, where his brio combines with a scrupulous care for the score. In Op 54, where a touch of whimsy comes between the two mountain peaks of the *Waldstein* and *Appassionata* Sonatas, Leotta takes a firm if arguably severe hand to Beethoven's playfulness. And here I missed something of Kempff's mercurial genius (and never more so than in his live Queen Elizabeth

Hall recital – BBC Legends, 2/01). Again, you may feel that everything is kept on too tight a rein in Op 101, though the third-movement *Adagio* is finely poised and speculative.

Overall, Paul Lewis's is the more wide-ranging and comprehensive cycle but there is so much to admire here in these eminently serious performances, particularly when they are so well if closely recorded. Bryce Morrison

Debussy

Deux Arabesques. Préludes, Book 1. Estampes. Suite bergamasque - Clair de lune **Nino Gvetadze** pf

Orchid (F) ORC100041 (69' • DDD)



Nino Gvetadze's name is new to me. I missed her previous three solo CDs of Mussorgsky,

Rachmaninov and Liszt but a Dutch critic speaks of her as 'a born pianist, gifted with the ability to speak to the heart'. So I turned first to the final track on the disc to see if her 'Clair de lune' spoke to mine. It did.

The Steinway she uses is beautifully voiced and regulated - you can almost hear the felts brush the strings – but not recorded so intimately that it can't breathe. Those soft low bass notes in 'La cathédrale engloutie', for example, are full, rich and round, a performance, by the way, in which she conveys magically Debussy's peu à peu sortant de la brume marking. The two Arabesques that open the disc confirm a pianist who understands and can convey the sensuousness of Debussy (try tr 16, 'La soirée dans Grenade'). Not for Gvetadze the chilly, objective view of some pianists. In the Préludes, Book 1, she has technique to spare in 'Ce qu'a vu le vent d'ouest' and impish charm in 'La danse de Puck', though perhaps the 'Minstrels' could have strutted more jauntily.

As a result of the pianist's project to awaken musical interest in children, more than 200 of them submitted to her drawings inspired by the Debussy she played to them (the back inlay of the disc reproduces some of the pictures). I'm not surprised. This is story-telling of beguiling intimacy. Jeremy Nicholas

Eben

Job

Andrzej Białko org

Dux (F) DUXO913 (45' • DDD)

Played on the organ of the Karol Szymanowski Philharmonic Hall, Kraków



Petr Eben's cycle *Job* is without question one of the outstanding organ masterpieces of

the 20th century. While the recording of this and other music as part of a series on Hyperion by the Norwegian organist Halgeir Schiager has done a good deal to boost knowledge of Eben's work outside the sphere of the organ cognoscenti, his music is still insufficiently known in the Anglophone world. This new recording of *Job*, then, is doubly welcome.

It seems to me impossible to say that this new recording by the Polish organist Andrzej Białko, made on the instrument in the Karol Szymanowski Philharmonic Hall in Kraków, is better than Schiager's, or the reverse. They are complementary and display different facets of instrument and organist, and, indeed, of the music itself. Schiager is, I think, slightly more lyrical – listen to the way he handles the haunting melody just shortly after the brutal introduction to 'Acceptance of Suffering'. Białko is more of a dramatist, colouring and contrasting more emphatically, etching the chords that open 'Longing for Death', for example, in a much drier fashion, so that the melody that subsequently appears contrasts with them but seems also to be organically connected with them.

Organ aficionados will want both recordings, of course, but if you can only have one, then you may well be swayed by the fact that the Hyperion disc offers in addition the substantial *Laudes* and *Homage à Buxtebude*, leaving the Dux disc somewhat on the short side at only just under 45 minutes. Nevertheless, this is a significant contribution to the Eben discography.

Ivan Moody

Selected comparison: Schiager (11/00) (HYPE) CDA67194

Lutosławski

'Complete Works for Solo Piano' Piano Sonata. Two Etudes. Twelve Folk Melodies. Bucolics. Three Pieces for Young People. Invention

Ewa Kupiec pf

Sony Classical (F) 88883 77843-2 (57' • DDD)



Just one concerto, plus the wonderful *Paganini* Variations for two pianos and the hour's worth of solo pieces gathered on Ewa Kupiec's new CD – for an accomplished pianist, Lutosławski was surprisingly reluctant to compose for the instrument. Or perhaps not so surprisingly, because Britten is another case in point. For the Pole even more than the Englishman, it was the colour of orchestral instruments that fired his imagination; and in his case especially, complex chords laid out for mixed-timbre ensembles.

So, while this disc is extremely valuable as a gap-filler (none of the pieces is claimed as a first recording but there cannot have been too many before now), the artistic pickings are relatively slim. The Piano Sonata of 1934 is a talented, sub-Ravelian exercise in three substantial movements. which the composer justifiably regarded as immature and which was only published posthumously on the permission of his heirs. The 12 Melodie ludowe (Folk Melodies), five Bukoliki and Three Pieces for Young People are attractive miniatures for pedagogic purposes, composed between 1945 and 1953, and typical of Lutosławski's interests in folksong and Bartókian symmetry at this time. Only the Invention of 1968 comes from the years of his full maturity, and at less than a minute of modest Bartókian two-part linear counterpoint, even this is no more than a tiny postscript.

Which leaves just the Two Studies of 1940/41 as viable concert (or competition) repertoire. More than viable, in fact, since they are full of the kind of edgy, gymnastic energy - indebted to Prokofiev as much as to Bartók - that makes the Paganini Variations, composed at the same time during the German occupation, so invigorating. Ewa Kupiec offers sharply articulated, colourful performances, with the just the right amount of metal in the tone, and the fullbodied recording quality helps make the disc eminently collectable for the Lutosławski and/or 20th-century piano music specialist. David Fanning

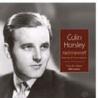
Rachmaninov

Recorded c1954-?1959

Preludes and Transcriptions'

Rachmaninov Preludes: Op 23 - Nos 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9 & 10; Op 32 - Nos 1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 12 & 13. Lilacs, Op 21 No 5 Bizet L'arlésienne - Minuet^a Kreisler Liebesleid^a Mendelssohn A Midsummer Night's Dream - Scherzo^a Mussorgsky The Fair at Sorochintsï - Gopak^a Rimsky-Korsakov Flight of the Bumble Bee^a Schubert Wohin?, D795 No 2^a Tchaikovsky Child's Song, Op 54 No 16^a (^aall transcr Rachmaninov)

Colin Horsley pf
Atoll © ACD442 (76' • ADD)



This disc, devoted to Rachmaninov, remembers Colin Horsley, a pianist of

the utmost distinction. A New Zealander by birth, he left for London at the age of 18. Those who found his playing 'reticent' surely mistook his immaculate taste and fluency for a reserve far remote from an alternately delicate and powerful emotional fervour that could take you to the very heart of Rachmaninov's all-Russian and aristocratic nature. All these performances are graced with a fleet and unforced quality that tell a superior story to other more blistering and aggressive accounts. His pianistic ease and facility allow him many subtle and surprising inflections that quietly illuminate a whole Prelude.

In his selection of transcriptions, his way with the *Scherzo* from Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is as scintillating as it is unassuming, its intricacy resolved in a manner that recalls Moiseiwitsch's legendary recording. Time and again he captures your attention by stealth rather than violence, though his dizzying acceleration to the climax of the ultra-demanding E minor Prelude from Op 32 reminds you not only of a flawless technique but a sense, too, of the menace that can engulf even the composer's most gentle and melancholic musings.

Suave and debonair (Horsley's appearance would have fitted perfectly into a Noël Coward play), he is a reminder of a distant time when pianists were less inclined to force the issue in a desperate bid for attention. Horsley was the most civilised of pianists and it is a thousand pities that EMI never recorded a complete cycle of the Preludes or his celebrated performances of the Second and Third Concertos and the *Paganini* Rhapsody. I am more than grateful for Atoll's issue and for their sound, which is as warm and engaging as the playing. **Bryce Morrison**

Ravel · Scriabin

Ravel Valses nobles et sentimentales. Sonatine. La valse Scriabin Piano Sonatas - No 4, Op 30; No 5, Op 53. Waltz, Op 38. Two Poems, Op 32 HJ Lim of

Warner Classics (F) 914509-2 (64' • DDD)



Pairing Ravel and Scriabin is an intriguing idea – two composers with their

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own unique harmonic language (the Scriabin works here are from his 'second period', when he had emerged from the shadow of Chopin), yet which have some elements in common, with their uncertain tonality, touches of dissonance and use of chords of the ninth, 11th and 13th. How easily the last of Ravel's seven little *Valses* flows seamlessly into the opening of Scriabin's Fourth Sonata. The skilful programming extends to opening with the Ravel *Valses* (1911) and ending with the solo version of *La valse* (1920), the former always striking me as preparatory exercises for the latter.

Sadly, though, from the performance aspect I don't think the results are altogether successful. There is no denying HJ Lim's audacious technical command, and she takes the considerable demands of La valse and especially Scriabin's Op 53 in her stride. Her silvery tone suits the Valses well but of sentimentales there is little evidence. The two Scriabin sonatas require a clear sense of line if they are not to sound episodic. Turn to Marc-André Hamelin for a transparent narrative where, unlike Lim, background gestures are kept in their place. They also require the full range of the piano's sonority. Hamelin gives you this in spades with con luminosità, estatico, imperioso and Scriabin's other directions executed with spine-tingling finesse.

Best of all on this disc are the two remaining Ravel items, a neatly turned *Sonatine* and *La valse* delivered with enviable aplomb, though I wouldn't trade it for the jaw-dropping account by the unsung Jorge Luis Prats.

Jeremy Nicholas

Scriabin Pf Sons – selected comparison: Hamelin (6/96) (HYPE) CDA67131/2 La valse – selected comparison: Prats (9/08) (VAI) 22 VAIDVD4414

Schubert

Piano Sonata No 21, D960. Four Impromptus, D899 **Rudolf Buchbinder** *pf* Sony Classical (\$\hat{E}\$) 88883 71742-2 (69)' • DDD)



Oh dear. Listening to the opening of the C minor Impromptu, you do wish that

Rudolf Buchbinder would leave it alone. This is not to say that he shouldn't play it, but that its artless simplicity is undermined by the mannerism of interpretation. The booklet-note puts a positive spin on this by saying that Buchbinder presents the opening theme 'in a tentative, cautious

guise, interrupted time after time by questioning caesuras', but his poeticising stance seems to sit uneasily with the music itself. There are more of those caesuras in the otherwise limpid E flat major and A flat major Impromptus, and a great deal of *rubato* in the G flat major. It is clear that Buchbinder rightly views Schubert as a proto-Romantic but this is Schubert-playing that takes too little account of the equally important Classical poise and taste that can be appreciated and enjoyed much more fully in the performances by Maria João Pires on DG.

The B flat major Sonata fares better. There is an apt blend of grandeur and sensitivity, with a clarity of definition to Buchbinder's structural scheme in the long first movement (done with the exposition repeat) and with the touches of tonal colouring and contemplative pausing less obtrusive than in the Impromptus. The shaping of the musical discourse here is much more compelling, the Andante deeply reflective but held in emotional perspective, the scherzo light and crisply accented, the finale combining spirit and weight with interpretative discretion and strength of reasoning.

Geoffrey Norris

Impromptus – selected comparison: Pires (5/98) (DG) 457 550-2GH2

Schumann

Etudes symphoniques, Op 13.
Faschingsschwank aus Wien, Op 26.
Kinderszenen, Op 15 **Leon McCawley** pf
Somm **©** SOMMCDO134 (74* DDD)



Leon McCawley launches his all-Schumann disc in high spirits

with Faschingsschwank aus Wien. It's the faster movements that come off most convincingly here, with the pianist finding the right combination of accentuation and momentum to carry along the opening Allegro at a fine lick, while the finale has a barely concealed glee. Where I think he's less telling is in the Romanze, which lacks the daring freedom of Pires, and in the Intermezzo, where his habit of leaning on particular notes comes to sound slightly calculated.

In *Kinderszenen*, too, McCawley is effective in the propulsive movements – 'Curious Story', the mock-pomposity of 'An Important Event', or the 'Knight of the Hobby Horse', which has a real one-in-a-

IN THE STUDIC

An inside view of who's before the mics and what they're recording

- More Dvořák from Bournemouth José Serebrier was back at the Lighthouse in Poole the week before this issue of *Gramophone* went to press, extending his survey of the Dvořák symphonies with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. The Uruguayan conductor took the BSO through the Eighth Symphony and complete *Legends*, and Warner Classics will issue the fifth issue of the cycle later this year.
- Oedipus Rex live from Gardiner
 LSO Live will issue a recording of
 Stravinsky's Oedipus Rex (coupled with
 Apollon musagète), taped a year ago during
 the concert to celebrate the 70th birthday
 of Sir John Eliot Gardiner, who conducts.
 The SACD will be released in April.



CPE from the OAE

January's lively portrait of CPE Bach from the **Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment** at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, which included five symphonies (Wq179, 182/4, 182/5, 183/1 and 183/3) and the Concerto for harpsichord and fortepiano, Wq47, was recorded for release later this year. Rebecca Miller conducted and the soloists were Mahan Esfahani and Danny Driver.

- Brahms from RLPO's Aasgaard
 Principal cellist of the Royal Liverpool
 Philharmonic Orchestra Jonathan Aasgaard
 (pictured) has recorded Brahms's complete
 music for cello and piano with Martin
 Roscoe. Avie will release the disc this Spring.
- Lubimov on a tangent
 Alexei Lubimov, no stranger to positive
 reviews in *Gramophone*, has recorded
 a disc of music by Haydn on a 'tangent
 piano', on which the strings are struck
 by a metal 'tangent'. Zig-Zag Territoires'
 disc will include the composer-approved
 transcription of the Seven Last Words of
 Our Saviour on the Cross.

bar feel. In the more withdrawn numbers his phrasing and *rubato* can seem somewhat laboured, especially alongside Argerich and Pires, to name just two.

He finishes with what is arguably Schumann's most overtly virtuoso work, the Etudes symphoniques, choosing to include the five posthumous variations a definite asset – and placing them within the études in a manner that, as he explains in the booklet, is 'instinctive and structural'. Again, it tends to be the faster numbers that come off best; but overall I had a sense that this was a slightly safe reading of a work that ideally needs to flirt with danger rather more overtly. If you listen to an artist such as Géza Anda or Alexander Romanovsky in the ninth étude, you get the sense of being on the brink of what is possible.

True, McCawley produces some beautiful sounds: he finds the requisite dreaminess in the second variation, which is followed by a very fine fifth variation (though no one can quite touch Cortot here); and, unlike the recent performance from Freddy Kempf, there is never a hint of coarseness in the accentuation. But listen to Hamelin and you have a greater sense of the architectural whole, of a great emotional and technical crescendo up to the finale that truly sweeps you along; McCawley is just a little low in the volatility stakes by comparison.

Harriet Smith

Etudes symphoniques – selected comparisons:
Hamelin (5/01) (HYPE) CDA67166
Anda, r1955 (2/04) (BBCL) BBCL4135-2
Kempf (8/13) (BIS) BIS2010
Cortot, r1929 (EMI) 704907-2
Romanovsky (DECC) 476 6208
Kinderszenen – selected comparisons:
Argerich (5/84) (DG) 410 653-2GH
Pires (4/85*) (APEX) 2564 60363-2
Faschingsschwank aus Wien – selected comparisons:
Pires (6/95) (DG) 437 538-2GH

Tom Poster

'In Dance and Song'

Bartók Three Hungarian Folksongs from the Csík District, Sz35a Chopin Polonaise-fantaisie, Op 61 Gershwin Someone to watch over me Gluck Orfeo ed Euridice - Dance of the Blessed Spirits (arr Sgambati) Grieg Norwegian Peasant Dances (Slåtter), Op 72 - No 3, Bridal March from Telemark; No 5, Prillar from the Church-Play; No 14, The Goblin's Bridal Processional Kurtág Játékok (Games) - Hommage à Farkas II & III; Hommage à Nancy Sinatra Liszt Frühlingsnacht (after Schumann, Op 39 No 12), S568. Widmung (after Schumann, Op 25 No 1), S566 Ravel

Gaspard de la nuit - Ondine. Pavane pour une infante défunte **Schubert** Impromptu, D899 No 3 **Stravinsky** Petrushka - La semaine grasse **Tom Poster** *pf*

Champs Hill (F) CHRCD075 (70' • DDD)



This lovingly chosen recital – striking in both choice and performance –

celebrates dance and song, key aspects of music down the centuries. Less robust or outgoing than many others, Tom Poster makes a haunting virtue of inwardness and refinement. His sound is warm and beguiling (Shura Cherkassky's lament that too few pianists care about sound could never be levelled at him). His velvet-tipped sonority, his colour and nuance make something very special of the Gluck-Sgambati 'Dance of the Blessed Spirits' and Ravel's *Pavane*, while in Schubert's G flat Impromptu his fluidity and balance between vocal line and rippling accompaniment are exceptional virtues.

Again, in Chopin's Polonaise-fantaisie, Poster sinks gratefully into repose and reverie (though his turn of speed in the build-up to the final climax finds him relishing one of Chopin's most exultant gestures). He is sensitive to Grieg's sophistication of simple folk beginnings in three of the Slåtter, reminding me for the second time in one month that these are arguably the composer's finest creations, and further, a strong influence on Bartók. Highly sensitive to Kurtág's assertion that 'it is possible to create music with practically nothing', he is hardly less successful where the virtuoso stakes are high (subtly so in Ravel's 'Ondine', aggressively so in the third movement of Stravinsky's Petrushka), though even here Poster tells us that discretion can be the better part of valour. He ends with his own transcription of Gershwin's 'Someone to watch over me' where, once again, he could hardly be more inward or empathetic. Poster writes his own excellent notes and Champs Hill's sound is both warm and natural.

Bryce Morrison

'Born to be Schorn'

Acosta Aires del Sur Breinschmid tour/retour Cerha Rhapsodie Dünser Solitudes Engel Siegfried is dead – Long live Siegfried Eröd Cuckoo's Eggs Gansch Clari Nice Guy Riihimäki Tango CluBb Sulzer Canzonetta Trautwein Bist eahms au? Tzanou Longtemps

Matthias Schorn C

AVI-Music (F) AVI8553297 (71' • DDD)



Back in 1976, Helmut Lachenmann composed his *Accanto* – a typically subversive

and uncompromising critique of Mozart's Clarinet Concerto and all that imperishable masterwork stands for. I suspect that Lachenmann would not be amused to hear a fleeting reference to the Mozart in the comic context of Leonard Eröd's *Kuckuckseier* ('Cuckoo's Eggs'), which closes Matthias Schorn's recital disc. Here is a programme blissfully – or depressingly – unaware of anything avant-garde or experimental: a collection of 11 short pieces, any one of which might provide a relaxing encore after a proper recital programme but which heard end to end threaten an overdose of musical trivia.

The most determined intimations of gravity are provided by veteran Friedrich Cerha, whose Rhapsodie even risks evoking the ecstatic birdsong given to the clarinet in Messiaen's Quartet for the End of Time. There are brief hints of extended playing techniques in the quarter-tones of Athanasia Tzanou's otherwise uneventful Longtemps, and two other composers ask Schorn to provide percussive counterpoint by tapping the instrument (Breinschmid's tour/retour) or stamping rhythmically (Sulzer's Canzonette). But wistful lyricism and dance-like perkiness are the most commonly encountered moods, along with would-be witty references to compositional precursors as disparate as Wagner, in Paul Engel's Siegfried ist tot – Es lebe Siegfried, and Saint-Säens (together with Mozart and others) in Eröd's Kuckuckseier. The jazz inflections of Tango cluBb and Clari Nice Guy also help to keep blandness at bay, and Schorn dispatches everything with unimpeachable fluency, recorded in the warmly sympathetic resonance of Vienna's Hofburgkapelle. Arnold Whittall

'Paroles de violoncelle'

Chaillou Seul Dutilleux Trois Strophes sur le nom de Sacher Honegger Paduana, H181 lbert Etude-Caprice pour un 'Tombeau de Chopin'. Ghirlarzana Jolivet Suite en concert Sauguet Solo Cello Sonata

Christophe Pantillon VC

Gramola (F) 99007 (70' • DDD)



This disc may sound suspiciously like a gimmick by which to group together some

gramophone.co.uk

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Unimpeachable fluency: Matthias Schorn during sessions for his journey through 11 works for clarinet written for him by 11 composers

hard-to-place niche repertoire but Christophe Pantillon's collection of music written for cello in France after 1945 is much more than that. What it does is present a fascinating survey of how much the French arts movement diversified and fractured after the Second World War through Ibert's Ghirlarzana (from the surrealist aesthetic, which already had an identity), via the liberal-minded and intuitive third of Dutilleux's Strophes sur le nom de Sacher to the discombobulatingly simple Seul of contemporary composer David Chaillou. It begins with Honegger's Paduana, too - a piece properly neo-classical in outlook (it includes all the Bachian counterpoint influence and a serious tone that became less evident as time went on in France), and a perfect starting point from which to fan out across the wealth of styles that this disc surveys with such insight.

In doing all this, the disc shows how limited the cello repertoire had been until then, placing, as a result, even more evolutionary value at the door of French cellists such as Fournier and Tortelier (as well as French exiles such as Rostropovich). All this is given impeccable attention by Pantillon, whose smoothness of line and lyrical accuracy of tuning allow the music to venture in whatever direction is

necessary. He doesn't try to control the music but presents each piece as a freestanding example in its own right, thereby illustrating his thesis in the clearest possible way. Caroline Gill

'Jacobean Lute Music'





Anonymous A Scottish Dance. Draw near to me and love me. Hence to me Molly Gray. A Scottish Tune, Scottish Hunts Up, Prelude, John come kiss me now Bacheler Mounsiers Almaine, Prelude, La jeune fillette. Courante. Pavin Dowland A Fancy. The Battle Galliard. Mr John Langton's Pavan J Gaultier Courante. Cloches. Courante C Hely Fantasia. Saraband R Johnson Pavin. Fantasia T Robinson Merry Melancholy. A Galliard. Walking in a Country Towne. A Gigue. Spanish Pavan. A Gigue. A Toy. Row well, you mariners Jakob Lindberg lute

BIS (F) . S. BIS2055 (81' • DDD/DSD)



Upon hearing this terrific release for the first time, I remarked to a friend that it could

easily have been titled 'Jakobean Lute Music'. Because, apart from its being an excellent survey of early-17th-century English and Scottish lute music, it also

finds London-based Swedish lutenist Jakob Lindberg in uncommonly fine form.

Elizabeth I and Henry VIII were both famous exponents of the lute, and by the time of James I's accession to the throne in 1603, that most gentle and noble of courtly instruments had long been resident in the hearts and homes of every person of quality. Thus the lute music from this period represents some of the best ever written for the instrument. The forms may be relatively simple - dances such as the courante and galliard and variations on popular tunes - but composers such as Daniel Bacheler, Robert Johnson and the great John Dowland wielded them with genius. In addition, there were also the daringly complex fantasias to rival those written for virginals or viols.

Under Lindberg's fingers, and on his beloved Sixtus Rauwolf lute (c1590), even the relatively straightforward anonymous Scottish pieces included here are imbued with the same affecting lyricism he lavishes on the works of those composers mentioned above and others. His performance of Johnson's late (and lengthy) F minor Pavan is especially good, making a virtue of the lute's narrow dynamic range and relatively rapid decay of each note to create exquisite rivulets of feeling from every phrase.

William Yeoman

Julian Anderson

Peter Quantrill pays tribute to the Award-winning composer whose music 'has a sure sense of its place in the world'

ith a rustle, a scale or a fanfare, Julian Anderson's music gives birth to itself anew each time. *Khorovod* (1989-94) opens with a riot, a tangle of voices shouting the same song without words but each according to its character, in its own time. This is pure heterophony (the simultaneous variation of a single melody), and having found it in Gaelic and Ethiopian rites of sacred singing, Anderson found for himself a way of making distinctively new music that refreshes the polyphony exhausted by post-Serialist music, in which tangle may quickly become composed chaos to the ear. *Khorovod* can be called an Opus 1, even though Anderson had been writing music for 15 years by then, because he intended it to some extent as a breakthrough piece, and so it was taken.

Recollecting the reception of his music at the BBC Proms, from surprised enthusiasm at the end of *Khorovod*, a frisson of amused appreciation when the antiphonal horn calls of *Imagin'd Corners* (2002) coalesce for a second into the Nibelung motif, to the communal hush of active silence

'Behind my work is a strong expressive intent, but if I splurge that out, I don't find it as interesting as if I cajole it'

before *Harmony* (2013) and unembarrassed cheers at the end of *Fantasias* (2007–9), I hear public music with a sure sense of its place in the world. Anderson has said that he doesn't write with a specific audience in mind, and the importance of melody in his music can't satisfy a coterie of avant-gardists, any more than seekers of background solace to their own thoughts will find what they are looking for.

A khorovod is a communal rite of dancing with its roots in ancient Russian folk life, and we are invited to join in as listeners. The form of a khorovod evolved through centuries of participation rather than being established by doctrine, and it's a useful metaphor for the non-hierarchical inner structures of his music, as well as the paradox between control and freedom, made manifest through tension and release, that Anderson confronts and resolves like a true composer. The principles behind heterophony and other vernacular styles encourage listeners to make their own choices. Does the clubland thrash at the heart of *Khorovod* bring celebratory or unconfined frenzy? Does the coda bear the meaning of emptiness or catharsis? It's up to you. At the end of a piece, Anderson tends to hint at a path not taken, or one yet to come, with closures unmarked but made necessary by the



journey in the middle. 'I'm interested in seeing what you can do with an expressive intent by approaching it obliquely,' he remarked to me. 'Behind my pieces is very strong expressive intent, but if I literally splurge that out on to the paper I don't find the results as interesting as if I dialogue with it, cajole it.'

The same technique of heterophony lends breadth and magnificence to certain passages of *The Stations of the Sun* (1998), *Alhambra Fantasy* (2000) and a Symphony (2004), which Anderson built as single, sustained narratives that reach a pitch of intensity where they have said all they could. Ancient traditions of nature observance also mark *The Stations of the Sun*, but Anderson's music is anything but primitive; as Jonathan Nott said when preparing to conduct the premiere of *Fantasias*, 'You look at it on the page, and you know immediately that every member of the orchestra has something interesting to do.'

In response to the quickening beat of commissions, Anderson has switched between writing for ensembles and orchestras, but smaller forces permit greater textural density. Scored for the 16 players of the London Sinfonietta, *Alhambra Fantasy* opens with perhaps his most violent music to date – the sweat and hammers building the Moorish palace, if you will – but when the energy explodes as eventually it must, what happens next is unexpected and glorious: no blasted



ANDERSON FACTS

Born 1967, London Career Professor of Composition at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London, having held similar posts at Harvard and the Royal Academy of Music **Publisher** Faber Music **Residences** Composer in residence for Wigmore Hall and the London Philharmonic Orchestra Coming soon Thebans at English National Opera, May 3 -June 3, directed by Pierre Audi

tundra but a slow soundsunrise, capped by a trumpet melody (Anderson likes these) and inflected by the Baroque magnificence of the finished palace, intricated further by the subtext of an act of memory. The piece is dedicated to the late Gérard Grisey, the French spectral composer and a friend whose investigations into the territory between and behind the 12 conventional notes of an octave made a deep impression on the young Anderson.

An enquiring mind and a command of languages supplied other influences beyond Anglophone quarters,

among them the music of Claude Vivier, Luigi Dallapiccola and Stefan Niculescu, though his roots lie in Pérotin, Dufay, Gesualdo and the Bach chorales that he would memorise each week for his first composition teacher at school. Having composed since childhood, he credits the local council's music library in north London with exposure to five centuries of art music, from Ockeghem to Lutosławski, less for shaping taste and more for offering ideas. After studies with John Lambert, Oliver Knussen, an earlier Lambert pupil, became both inspiring mentor and vital champion.

Anderson recently opened the bottom drawer and took out a string quartet, written when he was 17 and premiered at last year's Aldeburgh Festival by the Arditti Quartet. Light Music already moves away from the process journeys of spectral music, into a world of 'glinting timbres, filtering sound like light through a prism' (Richard Fairman in the Financial Times) that Anderson has made his own ever since. The title's double meaning encloses a weightless discourse of sharp contrasts that plays untempered pitches against their better-behaved near-relatives. So do the four spatially separated horns at the start of Imagin'd Corners, slipping between the cracks of diatonic harmony, opening up a wondrous sense of expanded space and time, and reaching out to the titled corners of Milton's round world. Out of scale to

its brevity, Eden (2005) uses the clash of mean and tempered tunings to make a prelapsarian world of rude, unsettling beauty. The Armenian film-director Sergei Parajanov said of his own aesthetic that it explores 'the inner dynamic that comes from inside the picture, the forms and the dramaturgy of colour'; a neat encapsulation of Anderson's music. In 1994 he named a short chamber piece after Parajanov's The Colour of Pomegranates, a film remarkable for the delicacy of its frame around a portrait of timeless folk tableaux, unsentimental, non-judgemental, celebrating life.

On a wider level, he shares with Janáček, Tippett and Stockhausen an ambition to write music without irony and an embrace of big subjects: who we are, what we seek. In Heaven is Shy of Earth (2006), the text of the Christian Mass is answered by settings of Emily Dickinson that question certainties, surrender themselves to natural forces and (like his music) test deep waters with simple craft: the flugelhorn tune at the outset comes from a wedding fanfare for friends. Book of Hours (2004) shows with electric energy that there are still half-hour pieces to be written around an ascending scale.

For the last three years he has gone beyond these old texts back to ancient Thebes, to write his first opera with a libretto adapted from Sophocles by Frank McGuinness. Setting the ghastly tale of Oedipus, and the redeeming virtue of his daughter Antigone, has been a long but natural process. 'As soon as I'm thinking of a character or moment in the plot, I'm thinking about what musical technique will best suit that, and I'm marrying the technique to the expression. It's not straightforward. I try to vary the relationship between the orchestra and what's on stage - the main polarity of this opera – between co-operation and contradiction, and at some points even ignoring each other.' Anderson can talk with passion and sometimes despair about tragedies of past and present but his music forms acts of rebellion against that despair. There is the via negativa of rejecting the past, and another of denying it took place. He invites us on a different, more positive path. 6

RECOMMENDED RECORDINGS

Three discs displaying the range of Anderson's invention

ALHAMBIA FANTASY

Alhambra Fantasy. Khorovod. The Stations of the Sun. The Crazed Moon, Diptych

London Sinfonietta, BBCSO / Knussen Ondine (F) ODE1012-2 (9/06)

A 2007 *Gramophone* Award for this disc was belated recognition of Anderson's significance as a composer, teacher, writer and dynamic presence in British new music.



Book of Hours. Imagin'd Corners. Eden. Symphony. American Choruses

CBSO Chorus; CBSO / Brabbins, Oramo; BCMG / Knussen NMC (F) NMCD121 (11/06)

The work of Anderson's period as composer

in association with the CBSO, 2001-5.



The Discovery of Heaven, Fantasias, The Crazed Moon LPO / Jurowski, Wigglesworth LPO M LPO0074 (1/14)

The Discovery of Heaven is a multi-movement work whose finale is an attempt to reconcile gagaku-

tinted calm and wild street sounds, 'but it is built to fail,' says the composer. 'Under the tension of trying to find reconciliation is a big fight - I like dialectic.'

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Vocal



David Threasher compares two new offerings of sacred Mozart:

'New College Choir are lusty, open-throated in attack and fully demonstrate their appreciation of the music' > REVIEW ON PAGE 100



Geoffrey Norris on Winterreise from Gerald Finley:

'This is a Winterreise in which the long-term narrative is eloquently, poignantly sustained'

► REVIEW ON PAGE 103

Adams

The Gospel According to the Other Mary Kelley O'Connor, Tamara Mumford *mezs* Russell Thomas *ten* Daniel Bubeck, Brian Cummings, Nathan Medley *countertens* Los Angeles Master Chorale; Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra / Gustavo Dudamel

DG M 2 479 2243GH2 (133' • DDD • T/t)



The Other Mary is Mary Magdalene. We may know her as the (supposedly) reformed

prostitute who washed Jesus's feet with her hair. Peter Sellars's libretto for this new opera-oratorio follows one tradition by combining her with Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, to make up the work's three major players – a family both of close friends and followers of Jesus during the time of his ministry and more modern-day believers struggling against an often disbelieving and repressive society.

The libretto itself – rather like that of Adams's El Niño (ArtHaus DVD, 2/14), to which The Gospel is in several ways, including form, a sequel – uses material from the Bible, from Hildegard of Bingen and Primo Levi and from a racy choice of contemporary American religion-inspired poems by authors in Spanish and English. Most of the latter (such as the Native American Louise Erdrich, the Catholic activist Dorothy Day or the Mexican poetess Rosario Castellanos) may be little known to British audiences.

As was the case with *El Niño*, this could all have been a trendy, even obscure collage-style mess but – unless you're allergic to 'historical' characters being carried out of their own time zones for dramatic and symbolic purposes – Sellars's achievement is pacy, coherent and intensely moving, and builds to powerful climaxes for key events like the raising of Lazarus from the dead or the Crucifixion. It provides Adams with a vehicle that has inspired music of especial fire and spirituality. As Alex Ross noted in his review of the score's

May 2012 LA premiere, 'a composer who started out as an acolyte of Boulez, Stockhausen and Cage has rediscovered his avant-garde roots, and those who prize him as an audience-friendly neo-Romantic are in for some shocks'.

Writing for an orchestra of fairly modest conventional proportions, Adams runs the gamut of colours with a battery of percussion (tuned gongs, tam-tams) and a quartet of piano, harp, electric bass guitar and cimbalom. As in *El Niño*, a trio of countertenors supply much of the Evagelical narration, including all the words spoken by Jesus himself. The sonic effect is as intentionally anachronistic as Sellars's libretto, ranging from neo-medieval harmonies to electric guitar funk.

The length of the work (just 133 minutes in this recording) seemed to worry some spectators at the premiere. Listened to at home, however, Adams and Sellars's new drama never flags. Hugely recommended.

Mike Ashman

Aperghis

Wölfli-Kantata

Neue Vocalsolisten Stuttgart; SWR Vocal Ensemble, Stuttgart / Marcus Creed Cypres (F) CYP5625 (50' • DDD)



The outsider art of Adolf Wölfli (1864-1930), the Swiss-German autodidact

who spent his entire adult life in an asylum, has exerted an increasing fascination in a world which has slipped its artistic moorings. Composers from Per Nørgård to Georg Friedrich Haas have been profoundly affected by its unfathomable draughtsmanship and dizzying scope, encompassing texts, drawings, collages and musical compositions. In 2001 the Greekborn, thoroughly Frenchified Georges Aperghis (b1945) produced Petrrohl, a vocal composition which four years later would grow into the present substantial 'cantata' scored for six soloists (the dazzling Neue

Vocalsolisten), mixed choir or a combination of the two.

Beginning with serialism and Xenakis before finding a more playful response to the experimentalism of European new music via Cage and Kagel, Aperghis had a purely instrumental work performed at the BBC Proms in 2011. Though little known to mainstream Anglo-American audiences, there is a substantial quantity of his music on specialist labels and a life-and-works film on DVD (Idéale Audience).

While the parade of fantastical fractured texts both spoken and sung, original sonorities and extended vocal techniques may not mark a new breakthrough, the Wölfli-Kantata is wonderfully well performed and recorded. Shorn of the absurdist visual theatrics which add spice to much of Aperghis's output, it uses speculative ear-cleansing invention to play with some of the ideas he finds in Wölfli's oeuvre: 'the overcrowding of space, counting numbers, inventories, ritual repetitions, details that are excessively magnified, overloaded and continuously deviated from their original meaning, saturated polyphonies etc.' Wölfli's 'architecture of fictitious spaces' being 'sometimes recognisable', Aperghis is not afraid to throw the occasional provocative consonance into the mix. Whether the work's five individual sections (here derived from separate SWR studio sessions in 2009-10) hold together with any particular logic is perhaps beside the point given the nature of Wölfli's oeuvre and its fragile yet inexhaustible search for meaning.

In the days of vinyl LPs with gatefold sleeves we might have been given a portfolio of associated artworks. As it is the one image provided is too small, tucked away inside the CD booklet. A cut-down black-and-white of the smiling composer takes pride of place. The voluminous notes are helpful, notwithstanding a good deal of Gallic intellectualising. Listeners can always let the sounds do the work and marvel at the dexterity of the performers. Interest is sustained for 50 Berio-ish minutes. David Gutman



'Lord, our Master': Richard Egarr and his forces record the opening chorus of the St John Passion at the church of St Jude-on-the-Hill, London

JS Bach

St John Passion, BWV245 (1724 version)

James Gilchrist ten Evangelist Matthew Rose bass
Christus Ashley Riches bar Pilatus Elizabeth Watts
sop Sarah Connolly contr Andrew Kennedy ten
Christopher Purves bass Choir of the AAM;
Academy of Ancient Music / Richard Egarr hpd
AAM © 2 AAM002 (105' • DDD • T/t)



The opening chorus of any *St John Passion* will tell you much about the rest of the

performance and here the first impression is of its being fast and loose. Not fast as in the driven belligerence of some other conductors or loose in the sense of being scrappy; no, rather it is that the chuntering orchestral disquiet and smooth choral lines of Egarr's reading give it a sympathetic, aching kind of tragedy that contrasts with those readings that focus more on the sharp, stabbing agony of the cross – as if the emphasis is more on feeling the wider compassionate message of the Passion than on immediate reaction to the horror story of Christ's trial and suffering.

And indeed this is how much of the rest of the work is. Yes, there is urgency from the chorus in the trial scene, but not of the shouty hysterical kind you sometimes get. Some of the crowd choruses are even light and distanced. An aria such as 'Ach, mein Sinn' is presented as something gentle, almost resigned, instead of the usual hairtearing angst; while 'Erwäge' is one of the most beautiful you'll hear (the viola d'amoreplaying here sweet as anything). Much of what makes this possible is the presence of soloists with naturally expressive voices who can also inject telling interpretative details, such as Elizabeth Watts's quick reining-in of the phrase 'Mein Licht' at the end of 'Ich folge' or impassioned surge of tone in the da capo of a heartbreaking 'Zerfliesse'. They are moments that bring an almost Mahlerian penetration, as is the noble stillness of Sarah Connolly's 'Es ist vollbracht!'. Andrew Kennedy and Christopher Purves are also effective and kindly, if not possessing quite the same vocal lustre; Matthew Rose's Christus is youthful and manly; and Ashley Riches's Pilatus is complex and troubled (his 'Sehet, welch ein Mensch!' halting and uncertain of itself). And it comes as no surprise that James Gilchrist's Evangelist is on the highest level of clarity and narrative intelligence.

In short, this is a *St John* with a distinct character of its own, and whether or not

that will appeal is up to the listener. Those who prefer choral singing with sharpetched attack and refined blend may be disappointed by what they find here (and it must be said that the balance is not kind to the lower voices), but Egarr is good at using his 16-voice chorus to release the music's natural line and warmth. That and its humanity.

Lindsay Kemp

Bruneau · **Debussy**

Bruneau Requiem Debussy Pelléas et Mélisande - Symphonie (arr Constant)
Mireille Delunsch sop Nora Gubisch mez Edgaras
Montvidas ten Jérôme Varnier bass Children's
Chorus of La Monnaie; Flemish Radio Choir; La
Monnaie Symphony Orchestra / Ludovic Morlot
Cypres (© CYP7615 (64' • DDD)



The fact that Alfred Bruneau (1857-1934) studied with Massenet and had

ripe operatic instincts is something that can scarcely be ignored in his Requiem. Composed in the 1880s but not performed until it was premiered in London in 1896, the Requiem has touches of the *grand projet*

about it. There is a hint of the Berlioz of the Grand Messe des morts in some of its more assertive sections, such as the unashamedly theatrical 'Dies irae' and 'Tuba mirum', in which all hell is let loose orchestrally and chorally, with the theme of 'Dies irae' plainchant woven into the ominous scheme of things. More subdued sections, such as the 'Quid sum miser' and 'Rex tremendae', have a flavour that is saccharine or serene, according to taste, and the smell of greasepaint lingers in numbers such as the soprano-and-mezzo dialogue of the 'Recordare'. But Bruneau's palette of colours and contrasts is a rich one: his chromatic harmonies and his dramatic scheme possess a power to stir the soul, and the orchestration - whether applied on a grand scale or in chamber proportions – is plushly effective.

Have a magnifying glass handy for the booklet-notes and keep the text of the Requiem in your head: the booklet omits it, and the choral and solo diction is indistinct after the incipits. The performance in general rises to the occasion, and the orchestra alone is mellifluously shaped and hauntingly shaded for Marius Constant's distillation of Debussy's Pelléas et Mélisande. **Geoffrey Norris**

Mahler · Busoni

Busoni Berceuse élégiaque Mahler Das Lied von der Erde^a ^aSusan Graham mez ^aChristian Elsner ten Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra / David Zinman



The real hero of this somewhat disappointing account of Mahler's valedictory

'symphony with voices' is the Tonhalle Orchestra. In spacious, pellucid sound, they uncover detail upon fragile detail, with such lines as 'the firmament is forever blue' in the opening song truly reflected in the seemingly infinite openness of the sound image. The watercolour washes of 'The Lonely One in Autumn' and 'Of Beauty' are deftly applied, while the darker hues of 'The Farewell', flecked in string basses, contrabassoon, bass clarinet and tam-tam. have an ominous beauty of their own.

Christian Elsner, the intrepid tenor, is decent enough, with one or two rather beautiful head-voice mixes brought into play in his lighter, quirkier numbers; but I am troubled not by the stress and strain that the demandingly high tessitura inevitably brings (inebriated or not, the high B flat is only just there in

'The Drunkard in Spring') but by the lack of breadth in the phrasing, with phraseendings invariably dying abruptly.

I did, of course, have very high hopes for Susan Graham, a singer I much admire. But there's something here - a disconnect, a discomfort – compromising her at every turn. The yearning of 'The Lonely One in Autumn' is never fully expressed and even the climactic line 'Sun of love, will you never shine again', which brings an extra unburdening dimension with singers such as Baker, Ludwig and Ferrier, resolutely refuses to come off the page. I'm talking about the rapture inherent throughout this piece. Maybe the tessitura sits too high for Graham? In any event it all feels a bit onedimensional, rarely if ever radiating that inwardness and searching quality which ultimately makes the final song so unbearably moving. You have only to compare not just Ferrier or Ludwig but Fischer-Dieskau (where the aura of greatness is unmistakable) in the line 'I seek peace for my lonely heart', where Leonard Bernstein (in my favourite recording of the piece) has his solo clarinet break your heart in the re-echoing of the phrase. And that searing E natural crescendo in the violins (a bit restrained from Zinman) should unlock something approaching ecstasy in the words 'Der liebe Erde' but here, from Graham, brings an almost anticlimactic understatement. I was seduced by the beauty of the closing bars (when is one not?) but remained resolutely unmoved.

What a smart idea, though, to add Busoni's orchestration of his piano piece Berceuse élégiaque, which was one of the last things Mahler conducted in New York only three months before he died. This 'continuation' of the journey (with echoes of Rachmaninov's Isle of the Dead) even seems to reiterate the recurrent murmuring of the word 'Ewig' ('Eternal') across the final page of Das Lied. A fitting postlude to what should have been a much more memorable account of the main work.

Edward Seckerson

Selected comparison:

VPO, Bernstein (2/67^R, 2/97^R) (DG) 459 080-2GX16, 477 5187GB5 or (DECC) 466 381-2DM

Marazzoli

'Cantate romane'

Marazzoli Salutate il nuovo Aprile. Occhi belli, occhi neri. Dialogo frà Rosinda ed Olindo. Speranze, e che farete. Piangete amanti. Mi fate pur ridere. Sopra la rosa. E sarà che la mia fede, Sinfonia, SInfonia e Balli Waesich Canzonas - X: XIV Soledad de la Rosa, Nora Tabbush sops Ensemble Mare Nostrum / Andrea de Carlo va da gamba Arcana (F) A370 (55' • DDD)



The renowned Parmesan harpist and tenor Marco Marazzoli (c1605-1662) benefited

from the patronage of Cardinal Antonio Barberini, whose family secured Marazzoli a position in the Cappella Sistina; he wrote many operas and also travelled to Paris. Other notable patrons included Pope Alexander VII, whose elevation to the pontificate was celebrated in Salutate il nuovo Aprile (1655); a full consort of viols provides gentle support for Soledad de la Rosa's endearingly sung optimism that the new spring will sweep the old year aside (an allegory hoping that the new pontiff would be an improvement on his predecessor Pope Innocent X, who had been on acrimonious terms with the Barberini).

Ensemble Mare Nostrum's appealing performances of seven more cantatas merely skim the surface of a huge amount of Marazzoli's music languishing in the Vatican library waiting to be given the attention it deserves. A few short instrumental pieces function as bridges between the cantatas, such as a brief sinfonia that forms a clever narrative connection between a blithe dialogue for the lovers Rosinda and Olindo (sung blissfully by de la Rosa and Nora Tabbush) and an exquisite portrait of melancholy in Speranze, e che farete. De la Rosa's delicate singing is flawless in the lovely (and long) Sopra la rosa, in which the vanitas poetry warns that even the queen of all flowers must be humbled when it eventually withers - one wonders if this entertained musical noblewomen such as the exiled Oueen Christina of Sweden.

David Vickers

Mozart

'Music for Salzburg Cathedral' Litaniae Lauretanae, K195. Vesperae de Dominica, K321 Choir of New College, Oxford; Collegium Novum / Edward Higginbottom Novum (F) NCR1388 (63' • DDD • T/t)

Mozart · Schubert



Mozart Mass No 4, 'Waisenhausmesse', K139 Schubert Mass No 6, D950b

^bRachel Harnisch, ^aRoberta Invernizzi sops Sara Mingardo contr a Javier Camarena, b Paolo Fanale tens Alex Esposito bass Arnold Schoenberg Choir;

Orchestra Mozart / Claudio Abbado

Accentus (F) ACC20261; (F) ACC10261 (104' • NTSC • 16:9 • DTS-HD MA, DTS5.1 & PCM stereo • O • s). Recorded live at the Haus für Mozart, Salzburg, July 28, 2012



Illuminating Marazzoli: Soledad de la Rosa and Ensemble Mare Nostrum record one of many forgotten cantatas by the Parmesan tenor and harpist





The choristers of New College, Oxford, ranging in age from nine to 13, 'cheerfully state the obvious truth that we elders hesitate to utter,' says their director of music, Edward Higginbottom, 'that Mozart is cool, clever, totally engaging, and the best'. Their offering, the latest in the current (and welcome) mini-boom in recordings of Mozart's Salzburg church music, contains two rarely heard works: the second of his two settings of the Litaniae Lauretanae (1774) and the Vesperae de Domenica (1779). The earlier work consists of a Kyrie and Agnus Dei framing a sequence of petitions to the Virgin and takes, by and large, a relaxed, pastoral approach to the Marian text, breaking out into something slightly more fierce at the central 'Salus infirmorum'. If it's not Mozart's most memorable work. it demonstrates the teenager's innate craftsmanship and taste, and is presented with utmost confidence and charisma by the New College Choir, lusty and openthroated in attack and fully demonstrating their appreciation of this music. The onus falls largely on the superb treble soloist, Inigo Jones, who exudes confidence and is unfazed by Mozart's tricky vocal writing; he is matched by the boy alto Michael Alchin and two choral scholars.

The Vespers for an unidentified Sunday (possibly Pentecost) are not as well known or as stylistically wide-ranging as Mozart's slightly later setting of the same psalms (Solemn Vespers, K339): the Baroque-ish angularity of the 'Laudate pueri' is here replaced by rolling counterpoint in what the 18th century erroneously termed the 'Palestrina style'; the 'Laudate Dominum' presents a treble aria with organ obbligato but doesn't boast the to-die-for melody of the K339 setting. In between the two choral works comes an Epistle sonata, one of those joyful oddities of Mozart's output that stand out rather like a runcible spoon, or Rutland. This performance, however, doesn't quite display the explosive vim of Peter Neumann's reading (EMI – nla), which once formed an instrumental oasis in his recording of the Coronation Mass.

Claudio Abbado, too, rediscovered some early Mozart, in this case the very earliest of his Masses, written on the grandest scale when the composer was only 12 (presumably with some help from his father). There's much to be enjoyed in this remarkable work, not least the 'Crucifixus', where muted trumpets and drums - a sound unique, I think, in Mozart - snarl out their deathly tattoo. In this and a similarly scaled work from the opposite end of the Viennese Classical era, Schubert's trombone-imbued E flat Mass, the presentation is suave and refined, the camerawork standard for this style of concert performance (ideal for those intent on studying the late conductor's technique), the preparation more thorough than in Abbado's recent DVD Requiem (11/13).

David Threasher

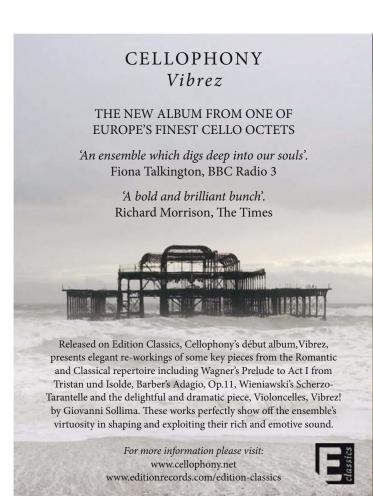
Rachmaninov

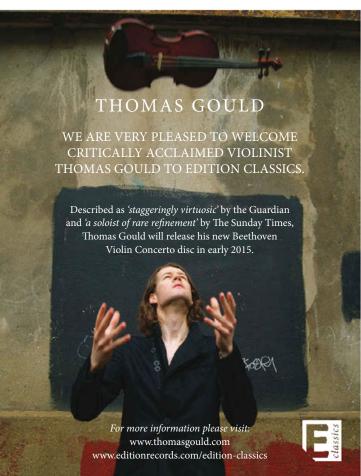
Vespers (All-Night Vigil), Op 37.

O Mother of God, ever vigilant in prayer
Lorna Perry contr Andrew Shepstone ten
Joyful Company of Singers / Peter Broadbent
Nimbus Alliance (© NI6250 (55' • DDD)



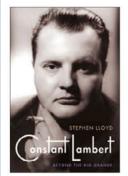
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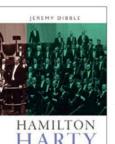
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luxurious 2011 recording of this choral masterpiece - a Gramophone Recording of the Month last year - the Joyful Company of Singers' new release is something of a shock. For a start, the overall timing is substantially shorter (some 13 minutes), although this Nimbus disc does offer a bonus track, O Mother of God of 1893 which, like the All-Night Vigil, provides a mighty challenge to any a cappella group, namely tuning (of which more later).

Peter Broadbent's brisk approach to tempi certainly helps to emphasise the rhythmic energy inherent in so much of Rachmaninov's writing and offers his 46-strong chorus some respite with their breathing, especially the splendidly reedy basses, with their long pedal notes and celebrated descents. With so much of the texture being homophonic, it is good that Broadbent maintains this strong sense of flow. There is nothing stodgy about this performance. The dynamic range is beautifully calculated, too, aided by the not-too-reverberant acoustic of St Judeon-the-Hill, London. Internal vocal lines (especially the tenors) are clearly defined.

The centrepiece movement, the Alleluiafestooned 'Blessed art thou' starts with a palpable excitement, only to be spoilt by an abrupt sharpening at 2'12". This is clearly an edit in need of further refinement. On the positive side, the singers' Russian pronunciation is convincing, and Lorna Perry and Andrew Shepstone produce strongly dramatic solos. However, I do miss the floating 'halo' effect produced by the luscious Latvians, so, despite singing of great passion, this disc would not be my top choice. Malcolm Riley

Selected comparison:

Latvian Rad Chor, Klava (2/13) (ONDI) ODE1206-5

Rypdal

And the Sky was Coloured with Waterfalls and Angels, Op 97a. Melodic Warrior, Op 79b Terje Rypdal elec atr bHilliard Ensemble; bBruckner Orchestra, Linz / Dennis Russell Davies; aWrocław Philharmonic Orchestra / Sebastian Perłowski ECM New Series (F) 372 9504 (73' • DDD) Recorded live, b2003, a2009



Terje Rypdal (*b*1947) is hard to pin down stylistically. His roots are in jazz (as

trumpeter and guitarist) but, like Jan Garbarek, with whom he started playing in the late 1960s, he has moved on into other compositional areas. His interest in unusual instrumental combinations and textures is reminiscent of his ECM stablemate Eleni

Karaindrou, though rather different in style and without her taste in exotica.

Melodic Warrior was written for the Hilliard Ensemble and premiered by them with the Bruckner Orchestra and Dennis Russell Davies in 2003 (this well-prepared live recording dates from December that year). Cast in nine movements which play without a break, Melodic Warrior is a cross between a cantata for four voices and orchestra (the texts drawn from Native Amerindian sources) and an electric guitar concerto. It is an odd mix: dreamy textures reminiscent of Mike Oldfield (in tr 2, 'Easy Now') co-exist with Pendereckian brass eruptions (as in tr 3, 'Song of Thunders'), Ligetian choral clusters and even Brucknerian ostinatos at one point. Rypdal just about holds it all together.

And the Sky was Coloured with Waterfalls and Angels (2009) is more integrated, a four-movement suite in which the composer's electric guitar features prominently. Inspired apparently by the 2008 Cannes International Fireworks Festival, it is a vividly coloured and attractive score, more consistent in style. It is superbly played by the Wrocław Philharmonic Orchestra under Sebastian Perłowski, recorded live at 2009's Jazztopad Festival. To my ears, there's little jazz-like about it, but iTunes still categorises it as 'jazz'. ECM's sound is superb. Guy Rickards

Schubert

Die schöne Müllerin, D795 Florian Boesch bar Malcolm Martineau pf Onyx M ONYX4112 (63' • DDD • T/t)



This certainly isn't the most mellifluous Schöne Müllerin around. While Florian

Boesch's baritone is resonant and colourful, a dulcet legato and graceful shaping of phrases have never been his prime concerns. Yet if you can accept a measure of vocal unevenness, you'll find his Schöne Müllerin an unflinching exploration of emotional extremes, with baritone and pianist in symbiotic partnership.

From the outset, Boesch's miller boy swings disturbingly between macho exuberance, desolate self-questioning and lacerating anguish. 'Ungeduld' ends in a torrent of despair. Even the ostensibly relaxed central group of songs ('Morgengruss', 'Des Müllers Blumen' and 'Tränenregen') repeatedly shade into bleak reverie. 'Mein!', usually sung with ecstatic abandon, here sounds manically troubled, as Boesch implies it should in his bookletnote. It's compelling on its own terms, though the rhythmic jolts and lurches, here and elsewhere, can be disconcerting, doubtless just as Boesch and Malcolm Martineau intended. If you expect this climactic song to 'spin', look elsewhere.

Hints of mental instability duly intensify after the appearance of the huntsman. 'Der Jäger' explodes in a crescendo of barely coherent rage. 'Die liebe Farbe', whispered in a frail, distracted quarter-voice, is not merely melancholy but traumatised. Then, after the numb, halting opening of 'Der Müller und der Bach', the healing process begins: an increase of tempo and a warming of the tone as Schubert moves from minor to major. Drawing on psychoanalytical theory, Boesch provocatively suggests that the miller does not drown himself, Ophelia-like, but survives, 'ready for his next amorous adventure'. I'm not convinced, and I suspect Schubert wouldn't be either. Heard without foreknowledge, Boesch's serene, other-worldly final lullaby easily fits the familiar deathand-transfiguration scenario.

Boesch's daring emotional range is matched by the almost expressionist vividness of Martineau's playing. He is especially good at balancing and voicing Schubert's implied contrapuntal textures, as in 'Tränenregen'. It is hardly Martineau's fault that the downward transpositions can slightly muddy Schubert's precisely imagined textures. If Fischer-Dieskau, 1961 vintage (EMI), and Thomas Quasthoff (DG) remain prime choices among baritone versions, the controversial Boesch and Martineau yield to none in no-holds-barred intensity. Richard Wigmore

Selected comparisons:

Fischer-Dieskau, Moore (11/62R, 8/75R) (EMI) 085209-2 Quasthoff, Zeyen (2/06) (DG) 474 218-2GH

Schubert





Winterreise, D911 Gerald Finley bar Julius Drake pf

Hyperion (F) CDA68034 (75' • DDD • T/t)



The affecting, chilling bleakness of 'Gute Nacht' immediately suggests that this is

going to be a Winterreise of vision and searching intensity. And so it proves, with the journey described in dark, dramatic terms, which at the same time subtly point up the shifting emotional aspects of the songs. Finley's rich and beautifully modulated baritone voice is also one that nurtures words and can encapsulate the musical images with which Schubert

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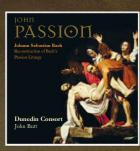
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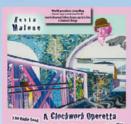
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Kevin Malone:

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clothes them, no more so than in the icy despair of 'Gefror'ne Tränen' (enhanced by Julius Drake's stark accompaniment) and in his veiled, hushed and then anguished interpretation of 'Auf dem Flusse', again with Drake establishing an undercurrent of desolation.

Finley can exercise his lyrical powers in such songs as 'Der Lindenbaum', 'Die Krähe', 'Letzte Hoffnung' or 'Täuschung' but it is not a lyrical talent alone: more to the point, it is the spectrum of tonal colouring, inflection and instinctive phrasing which lend this performance of Winterreise such an absorbing sense of inner communion with the soul. Nothing is exaggerated; but on an intimate scale Finley and Drake find the nub of the dramatic psychological substance of these songs. As the cycle progresses, the sense of disillusion and aching despondency becomes all the more unsettling, Finley and Drake finding a still hopelessness in 'Das Wirtshaus', the traveller 'weary to the point of collapse'. With each song shrewdly characterised, this is also a Winterreise in which the long-term narrative is eloquently, poignantly sustained. **Geoffrey Norris**

Sheppard



Libera nos I & II. Reges Tharsis et insulae. Gaude virgo Christiphera. Sacris solemniis. Paschal Kyrie. Missa Cantate. Adesto sancta Trinitas II. Hodie nobis caelorum rex. Verbum caro Choir of St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh / Duncan Ferguson

Delphian (F) DCD34123 (69' • DDD • T/t)

Sheppard · Davy · Mundy

'The Voice of the Turtle Dove'

Davy O Domine caeli terraeque creator.

Ah, mine heart, remember thee well Mundy

Adolescentulus sum ego. Vox patris caelestis

Sheppard Gaude, gaude, gaude Maria.

Libera nos I & II. In manus tuas - I; III

The Sixteen / Harry Christophers

Coro © CR16119 (71' • DDD • T/t)





Perhaps the most striking feature of this recording from the Choir of St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh, is the way in which the trebles seem perfectly integrated within the ensemble: one thinks of other choral foundations in which the distinctiveness of the boy trebles' timbre, though distinctive and even moving, makes it stand not only above but ever so slightly apart from the

men. Is it the presence of girls here as well as boys that lends extra cohesion and vigour to the top line? I think so; and if I'm right, then this is eloquent advocacy for mixed trebles. Sheppard's trick of having them divide into a triad for the final chord of sections is reminiscent of those concluding flourishes of a fireworks display that break into a cluster. The rest of the choir is equally well matched and solid, and the whole is recorded with admirable presence and clarity; a worthy successor to this choir's very impressive recording of Taverner's *Missa Corona spinea* a few years back (3/10).

This anthology includes a few of the usual favourites (the more famous of the two Libera nos settings, for example), but the choice of relatively brisk tempi precludes the reverential feel that has become something of a cliché of Sheppard interpretations generally. All of this culminates (perhaps - the whole disc is compelling listening) in the Missa Cantate, which lays fair claim to being Sheppard's most accomplished work in this genre: the use of sequence, reminiscent of Taverner, is particularly confident. Having expressed polite reservations about Sheppard's music a few months back, I'm delighted to draw attention to a recording that silences (or at least moderates) those doubts; anyone who's ever shared them should hear this.

Sheppard features prominently in The Sixteen's latest disc, which offers new interpretations of works from the group's back catalogue of English repertory. Their interpretation of In manus tuas (one of Sheppard's most affecting creations) is very effective, and Gaude, gaude, gaude Maria is effortlessly eloquent. But this very effortlessness detracts at times from the sense of occasion: the first of Sheppard's Libera nos settings is a case in point, epitomising the reverential tone I mentioned earlier. The same might be said for Davy's monumental O Domine caeli, more polished than The Sixteen's earlier account (7/93) but lacking the moments of tension and resolution that made it memorable (notably the build-up towards and arrival on the held chord just before the final 'Amen'). On the other hand, the soloists do well by his Ab, mine heart, and Mundy's Vox patris caelestis, engagingly fleet of foot, belies its length and concludes the disc very satisfyingly. Fabrice Fitch

Tallis

Missa Puer natus est nobis. Salvator mundi, Domine. Quod chorus vatum. Benedictus. Magnificat a 4. Audivi vocem de caelo. Videte miraculum

The Cardinall's Musick / Andrew Carwood Hyperion © CDA68026 (68' • DDD • T/t)



The first recording of Tallis's *Missa Puer natus est nobis* dates from 2001 – a

result not of neglect but of incomplete manuscripts. Since its rediscovery, though, the Mass has been well served, first by The Tallis Scholars and then by Chapelle du Roi, America's Handel and Haydn Society Chorus and Stile Antico. Now The Cardinall's Musick, fresh from their *Gramophone* Award-winning Byrd Edition, have turned their attention to the complete vocal works of Tallis and to his Christmas Mass.

This third disc in the series showcases the many musical faces of a chameleon-composer capable of keeping his footing (and his head) through turbulent religious times. We move from a pre-Reformation alternatim *Magnificat a 4*, vivid and sensitive but still an apprentice piece, to the sophisticated counterpoint of the responsory *Videte miraculum*, and of course the seven-voice Mass itself – a festal *cantus firmus* Mass of huge scale, probably composed during Mary I's reign.

Oddly, despite its thick and unusual vocal distribution, there are no verse sections. Singers must create their own light and shade, particularly in the *Sanctus*, where the music enters a meditative harmonic stasis. Where The Tallis Scholars achieve this organically, aided by the silvered clarity of their trebles, the darker, woodier voices of The Cardinall's Musick too often settle into a dynamic and textural groove, failing to discover and articulate the smaller musical narratives among so many long lines.

The motets Salvator mundi and Videte miraculum offer perhaps the best touchstones of what we can expect from the Tallis Edition. In ground this well trodden, The Cardinall's Musick can't quite find a foothold. Stile Antico are more emotionally charged, The Sixteen and Oxford Camerata clearer and cleaner. With a complete Tallis already available from Chapelle du Roi, The Cardinall's Musick are going to have to make a more compelling case for their own series. Alexandra Coghlan

Missa Puer natus est nobis – selected comparisons:

Tallis Scholars, Phillips (12/98^R, 1/04)

(GIME) CDGIM034 or CDGIM202

Chapelle du Roi, Dixon (4/99) (SIGN) SIGCD003

Handel & Haydn Soc, Llewellyn (ARAB) Z6771

Sixteen, Christophers (CORO) COR16037

Stile Antico (HARM) HMU80 7517

Salvator mundi, Videte miraculum – selected comparison:

Oxford Camerata, Summerly (11/94) (NAXO) 8 550576

Salvator mundi – selected comparison: Sixteen, Christophers (8/13) (CORO) COR16111 Videte miraculum – selected comparison: Sixteen, Christophers (12/88) (HYPE) CDA66263

Tavener





The Veil of the Temple

Patricia Rozario sop Choir of the Temple Church; Holst Singers; Members of the English Chamber Orchestra / Stephen Layton

Signum (M) (2) SIGCD367 (148' • DDD • T/t) Recorded 2003. From RCA 82876 66154-2 (3/05)



Signum has done us a great service in making available this recording of the reduced version

of The Veil of the Temple, originally on RCA. Tavener, after all, regarded it as the summation of his life's work. It is certainly the apex of the interest in 'perennialism', the belief that the same message underlies all the great religions of the earth, that preoccupied the composer during the last decade or so of his life, and thus brings together not only texts from Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism but also musical elements from various traditions.

Thus there are the familiar melodic lines reflecting the influence of Byzantine chant, together with the rhythms of Samavedic and Sufi chant; the sense of contemplative stasis and shining choral sound that was characteristic of Tavener's music from his earliest compositions; and, presiding over all this like an angel, the soaring voice of Patricia Rozario. The music's sense of static adoration coexists, paradoxically, with a sense of movement, achieved partly through the rigour and epic grandeur of the musical structure as a whole, and partly through the sheer busyness of some of the musical textures - 'Mary Theotokos' from Cycle VII is a good example, with its eternally revolving canons, creating a surface positively teeming with activity over a background of extreme harmonic stasis, as is the stunning 'Alleluia' that follows it, a sort of aural equivalent of a star-filled skyscape. Performance and recording are outstanding. An essential testimony to the vitality of the musical and spiritual vision of the final creative phase of one of Britain's greatest composers. Ivan Moody

Telemann

'Luther Cantatas'

Es spricht der Unweisen Mund wohl, TWV1:533a. Es wollt uns Gott genädig sein, TWV1:544. Herr, wir liegen für dir mit unserm Gebet, TWV1:781. So ziehet nun an als die Auserwählten Gottes, TWV1:1390. Wertes Zion, sei getrost, TWV1:1606

Bach Consort Leipzig; Saxon Baroque Orchestra / Gotthold Schwarz

CPO (F) CPO777 753-2 (71' • DDD)



This disc brings together five cantatas closely associated with Luther, mostly

on texts by Telemann's long-term collaborator Erdmann Neumeister and reproducing a concert given at the Magdeburg Telemann Festival Days in 2012. Although the works span some 30 years, there are few discernible stylistic discrepancies. That said, their scoring is sufficiently varied that the transfer from concert to disc is straightforward.

The most extended and festive work is Wertes Zion, sei getrost, which sees the composer deploy the sort of lavish resources that often find him at his best: three trumpets, two oboes, timpani and strings. An extended tutti passage, 'Seid böser, ihr Völker', alternates a number of textures in quick succession, including some massed effects that recall much older music, and follows this up with a richly scored but still light-footed aria for alto and tenor. After such an inventive period, the concluding 'Halleluja' in rondo form disappoints at first hearing, predictable and formulaic. That's Telemann all over, his critics might say. Perhaps they're right, but then each of these cantatas has something to offer, and even that finale has a way of insinuating itself into the mind's ear. For what it's worth, my appreciation of this disc has grown with repeated listening. The performances are zestful, the soloists and ensemble well matched. As they say, there's a whole lot more where that came from. Fabrice Fitch

Wolf

CD: Karwoche. Auf ein altes Bild. Er ist's. Neue Liebe. In der Frühe. Schlafendes Jesuskind. Seufzer, Wo find ich Trost, Gebet, Herr, was trägt der Boden hier. Wunden trägst du, mein Geliebter. Gesang Weylas. Denk es, o Seele!. An den Schlaf

DVD: Irrsal - a film by Clara Pons

Dietrich Henschel bar Royal Flemish Philharmonic Orchestra / Philippe Herreweghe

Evil Penguin © 2 (CD + 22) EPRC014 (39' + 57' • DDD • NTSC • 16:9 • DD5.1 & DD stereo • 0)



Hugo Wolf's songs tend to be such selfsufficient worlds in miniature that one

rarely sees them given the sort of highconcept treatment exemplified by this set, containing a 39-minute collection of audio-only Wolf songs setting poems by Eduard Mörike and then a 56-minute film built around them, both dominated by Dietrich Henschel. The songs are presented in orchestrated form, mostly by the composer, though two are by Stravinsky, whose somewhat aggressive tendencies with wind instruments give a new bite to Wolf's dissonances.

Henschel hasn't always been at his best with Wolf but he is here, always with a firm vocal line creating a clear path through the thickets of chromatic accompaniment, always with deeply felt attention to the words and any number of moments when you could swear he is channelling Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau (no bad thing). Philippe Herreweghe's accompaniment with the low-vibrato Royal Flemish Philharmonic maintains welcome transparency in potentially congested textures.

The Clara Pons film leaves a less penetrating impression: it's a dialoguefree series of images, using Wolf as an emotional counterpoint on the soundtrack, showing a middle-aged country cleric (remember, Mörike was a priest) struggling with sexual desire for a young woman in his congregation. Not an unfamiliar story; but here it's told with a kind of pastoral quietude, showing both parties with increasingly few clothes. As heavy-handed as the imagery can be, I was most struck by a scene with Henschel alone in the woods, sweaty and shirtless, attempting to build his own cross out of logs, only to have it collapse and tumble down the hill.

David Patrick Stearns

'Easter Cantatas of 18th-Century Gdańsk'

Freislich Er ist darum für alle gestorben. Der Tod ist verschlungen in den Sieg Mohrheim Ich weiss, dass mein Erlöser lebt Pucklitz Erstanden ist der heil'ge Christ - Concerto; Cantata Roemhildt Jesu schenk uns deinen Frieden Heike Heilmann sop Ewa Zeuner contr Virgil Hartinger ten Marek Rzepka bass Goldberg Baroque Ensemble / Andrzej Mikołaj Szadejko Sarton (F) SARTON014-1 (70' • DDD)



Someone, it seems, is keen on putting Gdańsk on the musical map of Europe. A little

while ago I reviewed a disc of perfectly decent harpsichord concertos by du Grain (5/13), and this anthology of 18th-century Easter cantatas from a local collection is



Singers upstairs, players downstairs in the Goldberg Ensemble's latest trip to 18th-century Gdańsk

labelled as Vol 5 of 'Musical Heritage of Gdańsk' (or Danzig, as it was known then). The four composers here will be new to most: the most distinguished is Johann Balthasar Christian Freislich, Kapellmeister at the Marienkirche from 1731 to 1764. Johann Daniel Pucklitz, the only one actually born in Gdańsk, worked under him, and Friedrich Christian Mohrheim, who trained under Bach in Leipzig, was his son-in-law and successor. Johann Teoderich Roemhildt was court Kapellmeister at Merseburg but his works were popular in the city.

The Gdańsk-based composers all use trumpets and drums and a double-choir layout, here realised as solo-versus-choir in a near-and-far relationship. The results can be swimmy in the whopping church acoustic in which they are recorded, but Freislich for one seems to have found it a stimulating way of decorating choral melodies. A few serious moments apart, the music is predominantly tuneful and often pleasantly lilting. My favourite cantata is Roemhildt's, opening rather like a Bach motet and containing some attractive and imaginative arias, and my favourite movement is the aria welcoming death with delightful pizzicato bell effects in the slightly more galant Pucklitz's Erstanden

ist der heil'ge Christ. The performances are spirited if not particularly finessed in the singing department. A disc of reference rather than one to put aside your Bach or Telemann for. Lindsay Kemp

'Eventide'

Anonymous Te lucis ante terminum Biebl Ave Maria Britten Corpus Christi Carol Bruckner Os justi meditabitur sapientiam Gjeilo Second Eve Hawes Quanta qualia. Reflexionem K Jenkins Benedictus Lauridsen O magnum mysterium Mealor Locus iste Rusby Underneath the Stars Sandé/Khan Where I sleep Tallis Te lucis ante terminum Traditional Steal away Whitacre The Seal Lullaby J Williams Saving Private Ryan - Hymn to the Fallen

Voces8 with Christian Forshaw sax Matthew Sharp vc Lavinia Meijer hp Decca © 478 5703DH (65' • DDD)



The lasting impression that lingers on from this disc is of a perfect blending of eight

voices to complement an imaginatively chosen programme. The singing of Voces8 is impeccable in its quality of tone and balance, and the sopranos preserve the

vocal line when necessary by not using strong consonants. They bring a new dimension to the word 'ensemble' with meticulous timing and tuning without a conductor. Instrumental strands weave into the choral texture seamlessly and thoughtfully. The cello takes the sound of the trumpet in Steal away, the harp accompanies the slumber song of the 'slow swinging seas' in Kipling's poem 'The Seal Lullaby', set to music by Whitacre, and the saxophone sings the eloquent main tune in Quanta qualia by Patrick Hawes. It's a revelation to hear such an intimate take on Bruckner's Os justi and Voces8 seem totally at ease with the contemporary 'Where I sleep' and 'Underneath the stars'. Further contrasts are offered by the ecclesiastically scented Second Eve and the vocalise 'Hymn to the Fallen' from Saving Private Ryan. This is easy listening of the highest calibre, beautifully recorded. Adrian Edwards

'Joy and Sorrow Unmasked'

DVI

JS Bach Brandenburg Concerto No 3, BWV1048. Cantata No 51, Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen Ferrandini II pianto di Maria, HWV234 Handel Concerto grosso, Op 6 No 2 HWV320. Ah! Che troppo ineguali, HWV230. Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno, HWV46a - 'Tu del ciel ministro



Classics (irect

Gramophone Editor's Choice Recordings

Disc of the month

Bach, CPE	Magnificat	Rademann £11.50
Bruckner	Symphony No. 9	LSO, Haitink £ 7.50
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	1930s Violin Concertos Vol.1 (2)	CD) Gil Shaham £20.00
	Jacobean Lute Music	Jakob Lindberg £11.00
	Refuge In Music (DVD)	von Otter, Hope etc. £13.00

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Leipzig Cantatas Bach, JS Herreweghe £12.50 Bach, JS St John Passion (2cd) AAM, Egarr £25.00 Beethoven Complete String Quartets (8cD) Belcea Quartet £26.00 **Brahms** String Quintets Takács Quartet, Power £10.25 **Brahms** Violin Sonatas Kavakos, Wang £11.25 Symphony No. 2 (SACD arr. Payne) Bruckner Pinnock £12.00 Chopin Louis Lortie £10.25 Nocturnes, Impromptus, Sonata Dunedin, Butt £10.50 Mozart Requiem (SACD) Rossini Otello (DVD) Bartoli, Kalman, Tang £12.75 Scharwenka Complete Piano Concertos (2CD) Markovich, Järvi £11.00 Shostakovich Symphony No. 14 RLPO, Petrenko £ 5.00

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Maria Keohane sop Sebastian Philpott tpt
European Union Baroque Orchestra /
Lars Ulrik Mortensen hpd
Estonian Record Productions (F) PMP ERP6412

(110' • PAL • 16:9 • stereo • 0) Recorded live at the Trifolion Centre Culturel, Echternach, Luxembourg, 2011



DVD recordings of concerts do not always promise the most exciting of visual spectacles, especially when filmed in

an auditorium as plain as the Trifolion Centre Culturel in Echternach,
Luxembourg, but this concert by the
European Union Baroque Orchestra under
Lars Ulrik Mortensen is worth viewing if
you value not just Baroque music but its
future in performance as well. EUBO is an
orchestra of young professionals and
students brought together to train, tour
and play together for six months, and very
good they are. The personnel is completely
different each year – onstage here are the
2011 crop – but the inspirational effect of
seeing and hearing them is a constant.

They are joined here by Swedish soprano Maria Keohane in a programme that mixes Italianate sorrowing by Handel and Ferrandini with more joyously inclined Bach. It shares three numbers with the recent 'Pure Handel' CD, and my admiring comments on that (8/13) can be applied here too. Keohane shows sparkling virtuosity in *Jauchzet Gott*, but also affecting vulnerability in Ferrandini's poignant *Il pianto di Maria*. She does go a little sharp sometimes, but it hardly matters when she can command such attention. Mortensen directs his eager players with sure hand and keen ear for detail.

It is the enthusiasm of the young musicians that is this film's lasting impression, thanks in no small part to the alert intimacy of the direction. Cut together with a sympathetic ear for the music's dialogues and pacing, the individual and group close-ups highlight the smiles, knitted brows, darted glances, dropped shoulders and ecstatic eye-closings that show the fleeting relationships and intense personal moments of playing in a group like this. Who would not enjoy playing the Third Brandenburg Concerto in such conditions? And who can blame that violinist who, after Keohane and concertmaster Huw Daniels have duetted exquisitely in the encore from Handel's Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno, wipes away a tear? Lindsay Kemp

'Refuge in Music'



Documentary and ^aConcert

A film by Dorothee Binding and Benedict Mirow

Anne Sofie von Otter mez Christian Gerhaher bar

Daniel Hope vn Bengt Forsberg pf Bebe Risenfors

acco/db/gtr/perc Gert Heidenreich narr

DG (© 2020 073 5077GH (58' + °106' • NTSC • 16:9 • °

aDTS5.1 & PCM stereo • 0 • s)

aRecorded live at the Bavarian Academy of

Fine Arts, March 20, 2012



Awareness of the Terezín composers over the last 25 years reaches a culmination in this documentary DVD

companion to the 2007 DG Terezín/ Theresienstadt CD featuring Anne Sofie von Otter, Daniel Hope, Christian Gerhaher and Bengt Forsberg (10/07). The documentary was shot largely at the former Nazi concentration camp and the concert in Munich, both taking the experience of the previous CD to a rather different level. Terezín was more a work ghetto than a death camp, and its classical composers, who represent an important confluence of Janáček and Schoenberg, have received much attention elsewhere. Here, they're heard alongside seldom-heard cabaret songs, often composed in the sardonic manner of early Kurt Weill, by Karel Berman and Robert Dauber, giving a much more direct picture of what inmates were thinking and feeling, especially when sung by Gerhaher in the Terezín courtyard with accordion.

Camp survivors are interviewed, including the guitarist Coco Schumann, who returns to where he was once imprisoned, and the Czech pianist Alice Herz-Sommer (whose death was reported days before this issue of Gramophone went to press), who was to Terezín what Dame Myra Hess was to the London Blitz, playing several concerts a day. Written accounts go even deeper, most remarkably those of the late Ilse Weber, a poet who pre-emptively sent her own son to safety in Stockholm and, once in Terezín, often sang her self-authored lullaby to displaced children and even volunteered to go with them to Auschwitz (children were disposed of early because they were less useful) so they could all die together.

Even those who have closely followed the rising Terezín awareness might be startled to find that conditions were even worse than previously described. It's as if this music couldn't truly be presented in its proper context until the public, increasingly well informed about the war, was able to

take it. In fact, much of this music was known before its 1990s rediscovery but the special commitment of post-war musicians was necessary to get it out there. Von Otter, for one, was motivated by the memory of her Swedish diplomat father, who attempted to call attention to the concentration camp atrocities during the war, was greeted with indifference by his superiors and, for the rest of his life, regretted not having done more.

The film isn't a monumental guilt trip; ultimately, it's about having a life beyond one of history's greatest tragedies. Some Holocaust survivors are burdened with untreated post-traumatic stress disorder and loss of observational perspective. Not Schumann and Herz-Sommer. By the end of the film, we know why they can face the past and find joy in the present.

How important is the music itself? We won't know that for a while. As Hope puts it, the music doesn't need its back-story to be valid, but the story is there and always will be. In the Munich concert, everyone is at their best. If Von Otter has been somewhat chilly in the past, she isn't here. But the cost of performing this music is much more evident (everyone is on the verge of tears at various points) than on the 2008 CD. And if this DVD doesn't get many repeat viewings in my household, it's because there's not a moment that's not deeply burnt into my memory.

'Russian Treasures'

Chesnokov Svete tihiy. We hymn thee.
Heruvimskaya pesn Golovanov Heruvimskaya
pesn. Slava ottsu. Otche nash, Op 9 No 3
Grechaninov Now the powers of Heaven, Op 58
No 6 V Kalinnikov Svete tihiy Kedrov Otche
nash Rachmaninov Nunc dimittis.
Heruvimskaya pesn. We hymn thee.
Bogoroditse devo. Otche nash. Vespers, Op 37 Priidite, poklonimsia; Blazhen muzh. Vzbrannoy
Voyevode Tchaikovsky The Crown of Roses
Tenebrae / Nigel Short

Signum © SIGCD900 (61' • DDD • T/t)



Like buses, CD releases often come in batches. No sooner had the

sound of Conspirare's low basses stopped reverberating after their outstanding 'The Sacred Spirit of Russia' (Harmonia Mundi, 3/14) than Tenebrae's have set the choral foundation trembling with their latest disc – 'Russian Treasures', treading the same Russian Orthodox choral ground.

Their 2006 recording of Rachmaninov's *Vespers* (9/05) established Tenebrae as the go-to British choir for this repertoire, and 'Russian Treasures' only reinforces that position. Favourites from Rachmaninov's *Liturgy of St John Chrysostom* and *All-Night Vigil* are balanced by less familiar treasures from Golovanov, Chesnokov and – most deft of emotional string-pullers – Grechaninov, whose constant 'hunt for prettiness' here finds its quarry every time.

Nigel Short lets the Znamenny chant that underpins so much of this music breathe freely, phrasing with improvisatory freshness and sense of discovery. Rather than static, monumental, this repertoire here becomes something altogether more intimate. Golovanov's Glory to the Father and Grechaninov's Now the powers of Heaven are rarely less than hushed but it's a hush that seethes and teems with energy, while Rachmaninov's much-loved Ave Maria – so often rigid with awe – is slight and unassumingly lovely.

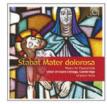
If there is a quibble here, though, it's a disparity of tone and character through Short's choir. The basses are pure St Petersburg – resonant, dark, enveloping – while the sopranos are more St Peter's College, Oxbridge. Texturally it leads to a superb blend, bladed treble edge cutting down to woody bass-line, but stylistically (and linguistically) it feels like Russian music filtered for English choral tastes. Conspirare's thicker, weighter voices are the more authentic fit but Tenebrae's are perhaps the more beautiful. Whichever you choose (and I say buy both), you can't go wrong. Alexandra Coghlan

'Stabat mater dolorosa'

'Music for Passiontide'

Anonymous Stabat mater (plainchant) JS Bach St John Passion, BWV245 - Er nahm alles wohl in acht Bruckner Christus factus est Byrd Ave verum corpus. Ne irascaris Duruflé Ubi caritas et amor Gesualdo Caligaverunt oculi mei Lassus Tristis est anima mea Lotti Crucifixus a 8 G Ross Precor te, Domine. Ut tecum lugeam Sanders The Reproaches Stainer God so loved the world Tallis In ieiunio et fletu. Salvator mundi I Victoria O vos omnes

Choir of Clare College, Cambridge / Graham Ross Harmonia Mundi (F) HMU90 7616 (00' • DDD)



Clare College Choir's recording of music for Passiontide, interspersed with the

plainchant *Stabat mater dolorosa* text, is not only a collection of some of the most beautiful choral music to be heard but

exciting evidence of the evolving and unique identity of the choir itself. In Victoria's *O vos omnes* in particular the *crescendos* can be all-consuming, the perfect arch of the music more than making up in musical integrity what it might very slightly lack in absolute precision of consonants and consistency of tone. It bears all the hallmarks – as do all the works on this disc – of a piece that has been extensively and intelligently crafted, which is not as prevalent a practice in the performance of this repertoire as it might always be.

It is not to be ignored that this is a very young choir - the lightness of the bass-line is particularly apparent in John Sanders's beautifully intricate and rarely performed responsorial The Reproaches, which presents walls of sound that need an even spread all the way through the parts. But although the balance is a little thrown by that inequality - which inevitably creates an undesirable top-heaviness in the texture it is mitigated by a smoothly robust alto line that supports the sound and runs through the texture (as it does in plenty of other places on this disc) as a strengthening and supporting thread. And besides, these are only tiny criticical observations to make of this disc: highlighting them serves simply to illustrate its accomplishment. The singing and, above all, direction are of such consummate musicianship that those small perceived imperfections barely matter at all. Caroline Gill

'Wunderhornlieder'

d'Albert Knabe und Veilchen, Op 28 No 7 Brahms Schnitter Tod, WoO34 No 13. Der Überläufer, Op 48 No 2 Franz Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz, Op 12 No 2 Humperdinck Christkindleins Wiegenlied Kienzl An einen Boten Knab Abschiedszeichen C Loewe Herr Oluf, Op 2 No 2 Mahler Des Knaben Wunderhorn - Lob des hohen Verstandes: Verlorne Müh' Mendelssohn Andres Maienlied, 'Hexenlied', Op 8 No 8. Jagdlied, Op 84 No 3 L Reichardt Wassersnot Schoenberg Wie Georg von Frundsberg von sich selber sang, Op 3 No 1 Schollum Schneckenlocken. Wenn das Kind etwas nicht gern isst Schreker Das hungernde Kind Schumann Liederalbum für die Jugend, Op 79 - No 11, Käuzlein; No 14, Marienwürmchen Sinding Fuge, Op 15 No 6 R Strauss Für fünfzehn Pfennige, Op 36 No 2 Streicher Weinschröterlied Suder Urlicht Weber Mein Schatzerl ist hübsch, Op 64 No 1 K Weigl Zum Einschlafen J Wolff Ach hartes Herz, lass dich doch eins erweichen Zeisl Kinderlieder - No 1, Im Frühling, wenn dei Maiglöckchen läuten; No 5, Auf dem Grabstein eines Kindes in einem Kirchhof im Odenwald Zemlinsky Lieder, Op 2, Book 2 - No 2, Altdeutsches Minnelied. Das bucklichte Männlein, Op 22 No 6

Wolfgang Holzmair *bar* **Thérèse Lindquist** *pf* Col Legno **(F)** WWE1CD60024 (70' • DDD • T)



Early in the 19th century Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano assembled

the *Knaben Wunderborn* collection of German folk poems, both real and fake, in reaction against the Enlightenment and all things French. Composers, most famously Mahler, proceeded to set them in droves. In a typically enterprising programme, Wolfgang Holzmair celebrates what he terms the Wunderhorn poems' 'longing for simplicity and order' through settings that range from guileless Weber and Mendelssohn to songs from the 1930s (though you might not guess it) by Erich Zeisl and Robert Schollum.

In captious mode you might point to an excess of bardic homeliness: say, in Robert Franz's 'Zu Strassburg auf der Schanz' and Brahms's 'Der Überläufer', where a boy laments the loss of his girl to a macho huntsman, à la Schöne Müllerin. Joseph Suder's 'Urlicht' sounds like a pale simulacrum of Mahler's. But in such sympathetic performances there are many delights here, from Mendelssohn's bounding 'Jagdlied' (the wistfulness at the end nicely caught), via two wryly affectionate miniatures from Schumann's Liederalbum für die Jugend, to Zeisl's delicately acerbic 'Im Frühling', sounding like latter-day Hugo Wolf.

These days Holzmair's distinctive, tenorish high baritone can grow tight under pressure. Schoenberg's song of a disgruntled knight (no hint of Wunderhorn simplicity here) stretches him to the limit. But at mezzo-forte and below his voice still sounds well. And characterisation is as imaginative as ever, whether in the mingled humour and tenderness of Strauss's 'Für fünfzehn Pfennige', the deft, unexaggerated story-telling of Loewe's tinkling, dancing 'Herr Oluf' (encounter the Erlking's daughter at your peril), or the gentle simplicity he brings to lullabies by Humperdinck and Karl Weigl. The two acidly comic Mahler songs are gauged to perfection by Holzmair, faithfully abetted by Thérèse Lindquist. A pity, then, to end with a serious gripe. The booklet contains texts and an illuminating essay by Gavin Plumley but criminally stints on English translations. Given the rarity of much of this repertoire, you won't get much help from the web either. How depressing that Col Legno seems to have such scant regard for its Anglophone market. Richard Wigmore

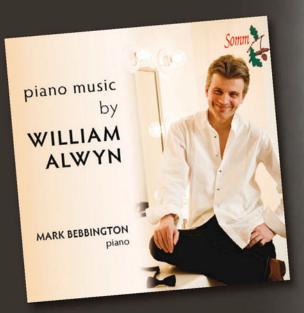
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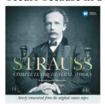
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REISSUES

Strauss year brings out the boxes

James Jolly enjoys blistering performances by Kempe, Blomstedt, Reiner and Maazel

icensing recordings to third parties is always a danger, especially in an age where bandwidth and almost unlimited server space make the 'long tail' relatively cheap to maintain. The thought occurs because in 2006, EMI licensed its



catalogue of Richard Strauss recordings under **Rudolf Kempe** – nine CDs' worth – to Brilliant Classics. Now, in 2014 – Strauss year – Warner Classics,

the new owner of EMI's catalogue, clearly wants to flog a few copies itself. So we have the situation where the Brilliant set (£18.60 at Presto Classical) competes with Warner's newly issued set (£30.50) – the advantage being that Warner has access to the mastertapes and the ability to remaster the recordings (which, made in conjunction with the East German VEB Deutsche Schallplatten, were pretty good to start with); oh, and Warner has a previously unreleased recording of the *Capriccio* Moonlight Interlude to add to its set.

The good news is that the sound is very fine on the latest set, more focused and with greater presence, though in all honesty I'd be hard pressed to say whether it's worth an extra £12. Either way, Kempe's Strauss is self-recommending: less high-octane than Karajan or Reiner but full of heart and warmth; and the Staatskapelle Dresden really is one of the great Strauss ensembles. All the significant early tone-poems are here, as are the lovely late concertante works like the Second Horn Concerto, Oboe Concerto and Duett-Concertino. There's also quite a lot of stuff that I doubt you'd want to listen to very often - the *Fosephslegende* fragment, the Schlagobers Waltz and possibly a couple of the works for piano left hand – but this is a great legacy by both composer and conductor, and surely one of the recorded classics of the late analogue era. Just listen to the Dance of the Seven Veils from Salome if you need convincing - it positively seethes with life!



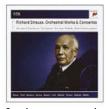
Not surprisingly, Strauss is flavour of the season – and presumably always sells well, so Decca and Sony-RCA have thrown their hats

into the ring. Running to 13 discs (£45.40 at Presto Classical), Decca's Complete Tone-Poems and Concertos ranges far and wide. Eschewing the high-powered Solti recordings, Decca here opts for Herbert Blomstedt and the San Francisco Symphony in the big tone-poems. I must say I've always liked the sound Decca achieved in Davies Symphony Hall and, with a conductor of the old school on the podium, you can be pretty sure that the beautiful internal balance and the acute attention to dynamics is as much Blomstedt's doing as his engineers. He's a notable Straussian and these are really very fine performances.

'Martha Argerich is on terrific form in the Burleske, galvanising the performance'

A number of recordings are 'bought in' from Universal sister companies: Don Quixote (with Heinrich Schiff and Kurt Masur slightly short on fantasy) and the wind music, under Edo de Waart, from Philips, and, from DG, the Symphonia domestica and Parergon (Gary Graffman) with the VPO and André Previn, and Josephslegende under Giuseppe Sinopoli. (The Panathenäenzug with Anna Gourari comes from Koch.) Vladimir Ashkenazy, in Cleveland and with the Berlin RSO and the RPO, conducts quite a lot - including a coupling of the horn concertos with Barry Tuckwell. Tuckwell had done them before with the LSO and István Kertész, where the orchestral playing is rather more distinguished. There is some great music here but, again, a fair amount of less-than-inspired material - if I never hear Josephslegende again I can't say I'll be that

bothered, although I've become quite fond of the early Violin Concerto.



Sony Classical has compiled a seven-CD Strauss set, drawing on various different labels, that focuses on the Orchestral Works & Concertos.

In vintage terms, it ranges widely. The earliest performances include Fritz Reiner's magnificently potent Also sprach Zarathustra, Ein Heldenleben, Symphonia domestica, Der Bürger als Edelmann Suite and the Dance of the Seven Veils (still sounding very fine boy, did they know how to make recordings back in the mid-1950s!). There are some beautifully characterised performances of Don Juan and Till Eulenspiegel under George Szell and Tod und Verklärung under Pierre Monteux, while more modern recordings include Macbeth from Maazel, a vividly coloured Aus Italien from Fabio Luisi, Don Quixote from Isserlis and Maazel (a performance with a huge amount of affection to it and really touching at times), and the Burleske with Argerich, the Berlin Phil and Abbado - Argerich on terrific form, galvanising the performance, Abbado a little po-faced (maybe he wasn't that keen on the piece).

The concertos (minus the one for violin) make up a delightful disc - the Oboe Concerto comes from Zinman's Arte Nova Zurich series and finds Simon Fuchs on top form. (And what a nice choice of performance - the work was actually dedicated to Zurich's Tonhalle Orchestra.) Salonen conducts a slightly undercharacterised New Stockholm CO Duett-Concertino, while the horn concertos are of rather different vintages. The First finds Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra offering tip-top support for Myron Bloom (from 1961) while Mehta and the BPO, in 1994, catch the mood of the Second Concerto rather better than Karajan had a couple of decades earlier for the BPO's principal Norbert Hauptmann. So a fine collection,

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with some truly great performances (Reiner and Szell to the fore) rubbing shoulders with some very fine ones. It's currently selling for £16.60 at Presto Classical, so that's seven discs for only a little more than a single full-price one.



A companion Strauss volume, issued under the RCA Red Seal logo, is called **Lorin Maazel Conducts Richard Strauss** and contains all Maazel's Strauss

recordings made with the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra on five CDs. Macbeth, Don Quixote and the Romance for cello and orchestra are common to the seven-CD set discussed previously. Maazel is a fine Strauss conductor and the BRSO is, it hardly needs saying, a magnificent orchestra. All the big tone-poems are here, including Maazel's third recording of Also sprach Zarathustra; quite apart from the technical wizardry taking place on the podium, the recorded quality is really very impressive. The same certainly applies to Maazel's Ein Heldenleben and the Symphonia domestica. Maazel is a cooler Straussian than Reiner but it's always jaw-dropping to hear a conductor operating with this kind of virtuosity. If you want to hear Maazel on absolutely top form - and never putting a foot wrong - just listen to the Rosenkavalier Suite. It's simply glorious: as David Gutman wrote in October 1995, 'always good at juggling multiple tempi, [Maazel] releases the uninhibited passion behind the notes even with the original inspiration at one remove. Rarely has the material sounded so charming, so impulsive in this context.'



In another of those strange marketing decisions, DG – just a few months ahead of releasing a brand-new set of the Schumann symphonies under

Yannick Nézet-Séguin – has gathered together Sir John Eliot Gardiner's Schumann with the Orchestre Révolutionnaire et Romantique into a five-CD 'Collectors Edition'. As well as the four standard symphonies there's also the first version of No 4, the Zwickau Symphony, the Konzertstück for four horns, the gorgeous Das Paradies und die Peri as well as the Requiem für Mignon and Nachtlied.

Gardiner's way with Schumann is colossally energetic and very sure-footed. With his dynamic and virtuoso orchestra, his performances are very radical-sounding – you really appreciate Schumann's highly

distinctive sound world. Never for a moment do you question internal balance: it simply works. (It's also great to be able to compare both versions of the Fourth Symphony and marvel at how totally Schumann changed the work's character in the revision.) The Konzertstück is thrilling and positively explodes with energy. As for Das Paradies und die Peri, it's one of those works that conductors simply don't tackle unless they're 100 per cent convinced, and it rarely receives a less-than-first-rate performance. Gardiner's is magnificent and there's some utterly glorious solo singing, particularly from Barbara Bonney, Bernarda Fink and Gerald Finley.



Shostakovich
Symphonies bring out
very strong opinions:
some people don't
go near non-Soviet/
Russian performances,
some only listen to

performances from the works' creators or very early interpreters. A 12-CD set of the symphonies from DG only contains Western orchestras, so is clearly not one for the 'authenticists'. That said, there are some very fine readings here, including Karajan's (second, digital) 10th and Bernstein's often very slow but, to my ears, really convincing Nos 1, 6, 7 and 9 (the Vienna Nos 6 and 9 are terrific). Rostropovich's Washington No 5 is deeply tragic and worth hearing at least once; Myung-Whun Chung in Philadelphia in No 4 is a bit disappointing, despite some spectacular playing (why not opt for the excellent LA Salonen version?); and the remainder are entrusted to Neeme Järvi and the Gothenburg SO invariably excellent.



The flip-side of the Shostakovich coin – performances from the former USSR – comes from Alto in a six-CD collection containing **The Great**

Symphonies (aka Nos 4, 5, 7, 8, 10 and 15) in performances under a handful of maestros who either gave first performances or who were among the first generation of Shostakovich interpreters. There's only one performance here conducted by its creator – Mravinsky in No 8 (a 1982 Leningrad PO recording). As the late Michael Oliver wrote in June 1989, 'Mravinsky's live recording of the Eighth is of capital importance, since it was he who gave the work its premiere, and neither of his two previous recordings was ever issued in the West. It is a performance of extraordinary vehemence and power,

vivid contrast and bitter intensity. The curdled woodwind dissonances and huge climaxes of the first movement are given a shocking force not simply by sheer volume but by a sense that the instruments are playing at the very limit of their powers.' Mravinsky also gave the premieres of, to take just the works in this set, Nos 5, 10 and 15. Here Nos 5 and 10 are entrusted to the LSO and Maxim Shostakovich (ex-Collins Classics); No 5 receives a really impressive performance - it's good to have it back in circulation, and in No 10 Maxim builds the work with enormous assurance - it describes a superb parabola from sober restraint to a truly massive finale (the 1990

Kyrill Kondrashin (who premiered No 4) takes charge of No 15 and the Second Violin Concerto (David Oistrakh), both with the Moscow PO (Alto reveals that the symphony dates from May 1974 but is quiet about the

Abbey Road sound is very good).

'To hear Maazel on top form, listen to the Rosenkavalier Suite - it's simply glorious'

concerto – it's a 1967 recording made shortly after the work's premiere with these same performers). Both are magnificent.

Rudolf Barshai gives us No 4 with the WDR SO from Cologne, a performance that just seems so much more 'inside' the music than Chung's somewhat disappointing performance in the DG set. Barshai was a major interpreter of Shostakovich as both viola player (in the Borodin Quartet) and as founder-conductor of the Moscow Chamber Orchestra. Symphony No 7 is a 1962 recording with the USSR State Symphony Orchestra under Konstantin Ivanov, a fine conductor (and composer) who has been somewhat eclipsed by the later generation of Soviet conductors. It's a strong reading in decent sound (the remastering on the set has been well done by Paul Arden-Taylor). G

THE RECORDINGS

R Strauss Complete Orchestral Works **Staatskapelle Dresden / Kempe**

Warner Classics (§) (9) 431780-2

R Strauss Complete Tone-Poems and Concertos Various artists Decca (\$\sigma\$) 478 6480DC13

R Strauss Orchestral Works and Concertos

Various artists Sony Classical © 7 88883 79863-2

R Strauss Orchestral Works **BRSO / Maazel** RCA Red Seal © © 88843 01523-2

Schumann Complete Symphonies **ORR / Gardiner** Archiv (©) (5) 479 2515AB5

Shostakovich Complete Symphonies Various artists DG ® @ 479 2618GB12 Shostakovich The Great Symphonies Various artists Alto ® ® ALC6004

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David Patrick Stearns on Rimsky's Kitezh Legend from Amsterdam:

'A career-making performance – one achieved with the inspired support of the Netherlands Philharmonic' ► REVIEW ON PAGE 117



Mike Ashman reviews a double Dutchman issue from Naïve:

'The matching of Minkowski and his regular orchestra to this repertoire is an idea of genius' ▶ REVIEW ON PAGE 119

G Benjamin Written on Skin Christopher Purves bass.....The Protector Barbara Hannigan sop......Agnès Bejun Mehta countertenAngel 1/The Boy Victoria Simmonds mez..... Angel 2/Marie Allan Clayton ten...... Angel 3/John

Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden / George Benjamin

Stage director Katie Mitchell Video director Margaret Williams

Opus Arte 🖲 🙅 OA1125D; 🗈 😂 OABD7136D (90' + 8' • NTSC • 16:9 • 1080p • DTS-HD MA5.1, DTS5.1 & LPCM stereo • O • S/s)

Recorded live, March 2013



From its premiere in Aixen-Provence to performances in Munich, Amsterdam, Toulouse,

Florence and London, and with a live CD recording already available (Nimbus, 5/13), George Benjamin's first full-length opera has already reached audiences across Europe and beyond. It deserves a DVD release as well. This live recording from the Royal Opera House preserves the original production by Katie Mitchell and gives powerful visual representation to an opera that is to a large extent a drama of the mind.

When Benjamin was commissioned to write an opera for the Aix-en-Provence Festival he was asked to find a theme with local interest. A medieval Provençal folk tale about a love triangle was his choice a simple story in essence, out of which Benjamin and his librettist, Martin Crimp, weave an opera that works on many levels. Mitchell's production reflects this, setting the action on a multi-level set with various compartments, including a medieval house and a modern, steel-and-chrome office and operating theatre. Past/present is only one of the layers of complexity. Pictures/ reality, truth/lies, freedom/repression and light/darkness (shades of Debussy's Pelléas et Mélisande) are all developed in a poetic narrative heavy with symbolism, and it

helps to watch with subtitles on to catch all the references. Perhaps Mitchell overcomplicates matters by adding extra dimensions in her telling of the tale but her production is striking to watch and always at one with the opera in its searching intelligence.

Filming and sound are both excellent, as one now expects from this source. Benjamin's score ranges from passages of exquisite iridescence, revealing his debt to Debussy and Ravel, to climaxes that explode with an orchestral violence new to his work. Nothing less would suit the opera's bloodthirsty climax (had Benjamin and Crimp been watching Titus Andronicus the night before?). The cast is excellent, especially Barbara Hannigan as the wife, combining vocal trapeze-work with a thoroughly modern dramatic intensity, and Christopher Purves in the Golaud-like role of the husband, forever searching for, and denying to himself, the truth. A new opera that will surely repay repeated viewings. Richard Fairman

Britten

Peter Grimes

Alan Oke ten

Giselle Allen sop	Ellen Orford
David Kempster bar	Balstrode
Gaynor Keeble mez	Auntie
Robert Murray ten	Bob Boles
Henry Waddington bass-bar	Swallow
Catherine Wyn-Rogers mez	Mrs Sedley
Charles Rice bar	Ned Keene
Christopher Gillett ten	Rev Horace Adams
Stephen Richardson bass	Hobson
Alexandra Hutton sop	Niece I
Charmian Bedford sop	Niece II
Chorus of Opera North; Chorus	of the Guildhall
Chorus of Opera North; Chorus School of Music & Drama; Britt	
•	
School of Music & Drama; Britt	
School of Music & Drama; Britte / Steuart Bedford	en-Pears Orchestra
School of Music & Drama; Britt / Steuart Bedford Stage director Tim Albery	en-Pears Orchestra
School of Music & Drama; Britt / Steuart Bedford Stage director Tim Albery Video director Margaret William	en-Pears Orchestra is © ≥ 108 101
School of Music & Drama; Britt / Steuart Bedford Stage director Tim Albery Video director Margaret William ArtHaus Musik (® 222 102 179;	en-Pears Orchestra is © ≥ 108 101
School of Music & Drama; Britt / Steuart Bedford Stage director Tim Albery Video director Margaret William ArtHaus Musik (© 202 179; (141' + 20' • NTSC • 16:9 • 1080i •	en-Pears Orchestra s © \$\sime\sime\sime\ 108 101 DTS-HD MA5.1,
School of Music & Drama; Britt / Steuart Bedford Stage director Tim Albery Video director Margaret William ArtHaus Musik (F) 202 179; (141' + 20' • NTSC • 16:9 • 1080) • DD5.1 & PCM stereo • 0 • S)	en-Pears Orchestra s © \$\simeq 108 101 DTS-HD MA5.1, June 2013

..Peter Grimes



Opera al fresco can be a hazardous experience during an English summer, especially on the windswept

east coast. Nevertheless, the audiences wrapped up in their woolly hats and winter coats who came away from this open-air production of Peter Grimes on Aldeburgh beach said it was an unforgettable experience. Now it has been issued on DVD and the rest of us can judge from the warmth of our firesides.

In almost all respects the technical side of the operation is a near triumph. Having the singers perform live (the face microphones can be a touch off-putting in close-up) to the accompaniment of a prerecorded orchestra was a gamble but it has paid off with very decent sound, the voices forward enough to make sure that every word can be heard. The widescreen, letterbox format offers panoramic scenes of sea and sky. Picture quality is remarkably good and mobile cameras move around the acting area so that we see telling details, such as Ellen Orford ripping out pages from her Bible. It is a shame that the Sunday morning opening scene of Act 2 had to be performed as darkness fell but the whole of Act 3 – floodlit, upturned boats against a jet-black night sky – is wonderfully atmospheric. The last shot of Grimes, as he pushes his boat down the beach, feels unbearably real.

Tim Albery's production tells the story straight, except that he places the action firmly in 1945 when the opera was first performed, with an English fighter plane flying overhead and local boys playing soldiers. By and large the crowd scenes work best, partly thanks to the epic expanse of this real-life theatre, partly because Alan Oke's Peter Grimes is an introverted soul (his crucial Act 2 encounter with Ellen Orford feels too mild-mannered on this elemental stage). Nevertheless, the cast the same as on the existing CD recording made live in concert (Signum, 11/13) - is a

good one and Steuart Bedford's pacing with the Britten-Pears Orchestra, recorded a week or so earlier in Snape Maltings, has a single-minded drive that transfers well. Against the odds, this DVD makes a unique and satisfying experience. **Richard Fairman**

Donizetti · Bellini

'Donizetti Heroines'

Bellini Norma - Casta diva; Fine al rito; Ah! bello a me ritorna Donizetti Lucrezia Borgia - Tranquillo ei posa; Com'e bello; Era desso il figlio mio. Maria Stuarda - Quando di luce rosea. Anna Bolena - Come, innocente giovane; Ma poche ormai rimangono...Non v'ha sguardo; Al dolce guidami; Coppia iniqua. Roberto Devereux - E Sara in questi orribili momenti; Vivi, ingrato, a lei d'accanto; Quel sangue versato. Lucia di Lammermoor - Oh, giusto cielo!...Il dolce suono; Ardon gl'incensi; Spargi d'amaro pianto Elena Moşuc sop Croatian Radio-Television Choir and Symphony Orchestra / Ivo Lipanović Sony Classical (© 88883 78822-2 (76' • DDD)



The Croatian soprano Elena Moşuc may be new to many but this successful *bel canto*

recital – her first major-label recording – is anything but beginner's luck. Moşuc's fully developed vocal personality has been heard in recordings as far flung as Franz Lehár (Schön ist die Welt - CPO, 7/06) and the overall production here is meticulous. Never does one have the sense that she has learnt arias just for the recording. The Lucia di Lammermoor mad scene has the infrequent luxury of the glass harmonica accompaniment (with a mirage-like effect, suggesting that her voice is chasing a cloud). Chorus and orchestra sound thoroughly versed in the music. And though this isn't usually considered conductors' repertoire, Ivo Lipanović finds shades of orchestral expression I haven't heard elsewhere.

And Moşuc is formidable. Her medium-weight coloratura has the necessary range and flexibility, her upper range being particularly thrilling, with high notes that aren't just confident but coloured in dramatically appropriate ways. Her middle register can be somewhat muddy with vibrato that gets in the way of the words; at times, her trills aren't that much different from what comes before. The lower register – particularly important for the *Roberto Devereux* excerpts – taps into the emotional depths of the distressed heroines in these operas.

For some listeners, all these virtues will be grounds for extreme rejoicing –

especially since the bonus cuts suggests that she has the necessary pipes for Bellini's *Norma*. But as much as her singing is grounded in the words, there's little differentiation among the characters. Everything is sung and portrayed much the same way. It's true that these opera scores traffic in character types. But should singers concede to that formulaic sameness? David Patrick Stearns

d'Indy

France; Montpellier Languedoc-Roussillon National Orchestra / Lawrence Foster Accord (M) (2) 481 0078 (96' • DDD)

Recorded live at the Opéra Berlioz Le Corum,
Montpellier, July 26, 2010



This is a real rarity: an opera by Vincent d'Indy, composer, co-founder of the

Schola Cantorum in Paris, editor of operas by Monteverdi, Rameau and Gluck. It comes from a concert performance at the Montpellier Festival in 2010. *L'étranger* was first performed at La Monnaie in Brussels in 1903; the novel by Albert Camus, published in 1942, is not connected. D'Indy's inspiration was apparently Ibsen's *Brand* but for the opera-goer it is Wagner who comes to mind.

A middle-aged stranger comes to a village by the sea. He is shunned by the locals, who suspect him of sorcery on account of his inexplicable command of the waves and his uncanny success when out fishing. Vita is drawn to him despite being about to marry André, a handsome customs officer. The stranger loves her but draws back on account of their difference in age. When she asks him his name, he replies 'I don't have one. I am he who dreams, I am he who loves. Loving the poor and the disconsolate...' He gives her the magic emerald with which he has calmed tempests and saved lives. When she casts it into the sea and a storm blows up, the stranger summons the lifeboat. Vita confesses her love and joins him: they rescue a boat in distress, but disappear. On the shore, a sailor intones the De profundis.

There is a clear parallel with *Der fliegende Holländer*, the Stranger, Vita and André matching the Dutchman, Senta and Erik. And there's a dash of *Lohengrin* plus, with the emerald having been used by Christ, *Parsifal* too. D'Indy was devoted to Wagner's music and there are Wagnerian echoes here and there; the storm at the end perhaps Wagner as refracted through the Saint-Saëns of *Samson et Dalila*. But there is Gregorian chant and folksong as well.

I found the opera second-rate, rather as, say, Pfitzner's *Palestrina* is second-rate: accomplished, much huffing and puffing, some haunting moments, nothing truly memorable. It has splendid advocates in Lawrence Foster and his forces. Ludovic Tézier, in particular, sings ravishingly and tirelessly as the Stranger: his two big scenes with Cassandre Berthon's Vita are as passionate as one could wish and the orchestral playing is just as fiery.

Richard Lawrence

Mozart	DVD SO
Così fan tutte	
Anett Fritsch sop	Fiordiligi
Paola Gardina mez	Dorabella
Kerstin Avemo sop	Despina
Juan Francisco Gatell ten	Ferrando
Andreas Wolf bass-bar	Guglielmo
William Schimell bass	Don Alfonso
Chorus and Orchestra of the 1	Teatro Real, Madrid /
Sylvain Cambreling	

Stage director Michael Haneke

Video director Hannes Rossacher

C Major Entertainment © ② № 714508;

© № 714604 (3h 22' + 18' • NTSC • 16:9 • 1080i •

DTS-HD MA5.1, DTS5.1 & PCM stereo • 0 • s)



Mozart's third collaboration with da Ponte is here given a makeover by Michael Haneke, an Austrian film

director whose *Amour* won an award at the Oscars last year. No lover of radical productions myself, I found it fascinating. You will, too, provided you forget that Così is an *opera buffa*: this is serious stuff.

The setting is modern: a sitting room with a terrace on which, during the Overture, guests are being served by waiters. The room contains a sofa, a fireplace and a refrigerator, this last much in use: I haven't seen a fridge resorted to so often since Hal Ashby's film *Shampoo*. Fiordiligi wears a short red dress, Dorabella a black trouser suit. Their maid, Despina, is in a clown costume and Don Alfonso sports full 18th-century fig. The big surprise is that there are not two couples but three, as Alfonso and Despina are – or perhaps have

been – married to each other. Throughout the opera, Haneke has characters onstage who are normally elsewhere. Thus, for instance, Fiordiligi fondles Guglielmo while singing 'Ah, guarda, sorella'; Alfonso addresses his recitative after 'Soave sia il vento' to Despina, who in return speaks to him when supposedly soliloquising. Haneke pays rather too much attention to the *secco* recitatives, with pauses and gaps that make the action drag.

The general seriousness, appropriate for the sisters' arias even when Mozart is mocking the grand manner, is extended to the lighter numbers. Despina whirls manically in her first aria, and hits Alfonso during 'Una donna a quindici anni'; Guglielmo delivers 'Donne mie' with a complete absence of geniality. In the farewell quintet, you would never know that Alfonso was trying to suppress his laughter. Just about the only amusing touch is Dorabella's T-shirt, imprinted with a picture of Ferrando: this is the 'little portrait' that Guglielmo produces as the evidence of his success. The ending is left open. The four lovers don't resume their original pairings (unquestionably da Ponte's intention), but neither do they adopt the new ones. Instead, as they sing the moral of the epilogue, all six engage in a tug of war, pulling this way and that.

Within the limits of Haneke's very particular view of the opera, the acting is perfect; and it's beautifully caught by Hannes Rossacher, the TV director. The palm for singing goes to Anett Fritsch but the rest of the cast, dominated by William Shimell's puppet-master, are not far behind. The officers' duettino and 'Ah, lo veggio' are cut, as usual, but so is Dorabella's 'È amore un ladroncello'. Sylvain Cambreling's conducting is unobtrusive. I am still wondering why the 'Albanians' shed their moustaches after their first appearance.

Richard Lawrence

DTS5.1 & PCM stereo • O • s)

Puccini

La bohème		
Gal James sopMimi		
Aquiles Machado tenRodolfo		
Carmen Romeu sopMusetta		
Massimo Cavalletti barMarcello		
Mattia Olivieri barSchaunard		
Gianluca Buratto bassColline		
Matteo Peirone bassBenoît		
Chorus of the Generalitat Valenciana; Orchestra		
of the Comunitat Valenciana / Riccardo Chailly		
Stage director Davide Livermore		
Video director Michael Beyer		
Accentus 🖲 🕿 ACC20283; 🗈 😂 ACC10283		
(114' + 20' • NTSC • 16:9 • 1080i • DTS-HD MA5.1,		

Recorded live, December 12 & 15, 2012 Bonus: The Making of La bohème in Valencia



This new *Bohème* from Valencia falls unsatisfactorily between two stools, with Davide

Livermore's production plumping for a safe but bland, uninvolving middle ground between updating and tradition. We get plenty of state-of-the art theatrical trappings – the set is not much more than a large skewed box, on to which multiple images are projected – but the minimal props tend to be bunched up in the centre of the stage, where most of the small-scale action, in straightforward period costume and unatmospherically lit, feels dwarfed, the principals rattling around in a vast empty space.

And it seems like no one has really decided whether the projections are there to participate in the action (they give us a hazy inn in Act 3 and occasionally reflect what Marcello 'paints' on his own smaller electronic canvas) or simply complement it, which they do somewhat superfluously with blown-up Impressionist paintings from galleries in Philadelphia, with whose Opera Company this is a co-production. We are further distanced from the actual drama by Livermore's tediously hyperactive staging of Act 2. In a bonus interview the director compares the scene to a Hollywood musical but that leads him to treat it as little more than a circus – fire-breathers, mime artists, stilt-walkers and oh-so-funny fawning waiters all vie for our attention and get a naffly choreographed extended curtain call at the end of the act.

It's a shame, because the young cast make an appealing lot. The Israeli soprano Gal James – a name new to me – is a very impressive, straightforwardly affecting Mimì, and she sings with focused lyricospinto tone. There's an honesty, too, to Aquiles Machado's Rodolfo, and his slightly grainy but well-schooled timbre is attractive. Carmen Romeu and Massimo Cavalletti make a handsome Musetta and Marcello, and Mattia Olivieri and Gianluca Buratto are lively and likeable as Schaunard and Colline. Riccardo Chailly conducts a lovely, naturally paced account of the score and the orchestra play very well for him. These virtues can't detract from overall disappointment with the production, though. The subtitles, apparently taken from an archaic singing translation, hardly help matters either.

Hugo Shirley

DVD (5)

Rameau

Dardanus	
Bernard Richter ten	Dardanus
Benoît Arnould bar	Anténor
Gaëlle Arquez mez	Iphise
Alain Buet bass	Teucer
João Fernandes bass	Isménor
Sabine Devieilhe sop	Vénus/Phrygian Woman
Emmanuelle De Negri sop . A	mour/Phrygian Woman
Romain Champion ten	Arcas
Ensemble Pygmalion / Raphaël Pichon	

Ensemble Pygmalion / Raphaël Picho Alpha 🖹 ② ALPHA951 (145' • DDD • S)



Dardanus comes in two very different versions. This recording is of the

second, staged in 1744 and revived in 1760. The first version of 1739 was criticised for various absurdities in the plot. It contains much excellent music, however, as can be heard on Marc Minkowski's recording.

The opera is set in ancient Phrygia. Dardanus, son of Jupiter, is in love with Iphise – daughter of his enemy, king Teucer – and she with him, though neither is aware of the other's feelings. Teucer plans to marry his daughter to Antenor, his new ally. Dardanus consults the magician, Ismenor, who gives him a magic wand. Disguised as Ismenor, Dardanus is visited first by Antenor, then by Iphise, who confesses her love. Dardanus reveals his identity; Iphise flees. Captured in battle, Dardanus lies in prison. He learns that he will be rescued but his saviour will die. Iphise has a narrow escape and it's Antenor, already mortally wounded by Dardanus's soldiers, who is the victim. Teucer is won over, and all ends happily.

After a Prologue for Venus and Cupid, the latter ushering in the story of a warrior 'enslaved in my court', Iphise is discovered alone. Like Ilia in Idomeneo, she is lamenting her love for an enemy. 'Cesse, cruel Amour' is a sarabande, washed by gentle flutes; but Gaëlle Arquez's Iphise is no shrinking violet and her air comes across as a demand rather than a prayer. She is similarly outgoing in 'O jour affreux!', the first number in Act 3. Equally accomplished is Sabine Devieilhe, the star of the Rameau anthology that I reviewed recently (Erato, 2/14). In the Phrygian Woman's 'Volez, Plaisirs, volez' she leaps an octave to a ravishingly delicate top D (sounding a tone lower). There's some good blustering from Benoît Arnould's Antenor and Alain Buet's Teucer, and João Fernandes is suitably cavernous as Ismenor. One of the highlights is Dardanus's 'Lieux funestes', with its



William Schimell (Don Alfonso) and Kerstin Avemo (Despina) look over Juan Francisco Gatell and Andreas Wolf in Michael Haneke's Così for the Teatro Real

mournful bassoons. Bernard Richter delivers it with feeling; elsewhere he tends to bleat when singing loud.

The booklet could be much better. No information is given about the performers and the photographs are unidentified. The articles are well translated by Mary Pardoe but another hand has evidently been at the libretto: 'Continue, superb victor, insult to my reversals' is but one of many *bêtises*. But, to end on a positive note, Raphaël Pichon and the Ensemble Pygmalion are excellent. You will need both this and the Minkowski.

Richard Lawrence

Selected comparison: Minkowski (7/00) (ARCH) 463 476-2AH2

Rimsky-Korsakov

 Alexey Markov bar.......Fyodor Poyarok Chorus of Netherlands Opera; Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra / Marc Albrecht

Stage director **Dmitri Tcherniakov** Video director **Misjel Vermeiren**

Recorded live at the Amsterdam Music Theatre, February 8, 2012

Extra Features: Interviews with Cast and Crew; Cast Gallery



With its unwieldy title, Wagnerian allusions and less-than-coherent symbolism, *The Tale of the*

Invisible City of Kitezh is one of those epics that often seems on the verge of revealing itself to non-Russian audiences as a masterwork but not quite getting there.

The Mariinsky Theatre toured with the piece, though in budget-compromised circumstances. This deeply felt production, designed and directed by the controversial Dmitri Tcherniakov, is a significant step further in the internationalisation of the opera, though it may always be a special-occasion piece for only the most sympathetic settings.

Updated to modern dress (avoiding the potentially distancing effect of story-book Russian costumes), the production certainly shows the sublime side of Rimsky-Korsakov but can't disguise its theatrical blind spots. The Kitezh plot involves a prince discovering the innocent maiden Fevroniya in the woods, taking her back to the city to be his bride only to have the city sacked by Tartars. Your favourite characters meet again in an afterlife, suggesting that the city of Kitezh is also a less pretentious version of Valhalla. But while Wagner gave mythological depths to his plot-lines amid

structural schemes that cast hypnotic spells on audiences, Rimsky mainly wrote beautiful music, not always sustaining the long spans of stage time. The final scene's apotheosis, for example, can leave you simultaneously struck by how incredibly drawn out it is (Fevroniya takes time to send a conciliatory message to the living) while also not wanting it to end.

With the story told in modern imagery, Fevroniya's pastoral home is an appropriately lovely clearing amid tall grass and the Tartars are truly brutal skinheads resembling something out of the Mad Max movies. (When Fevroniya asks the traitor Grishka if he's the Antichrist, it's a reasonable question.) After the poor girl expires, she enters the sort of wide-open spaces that suggest Kitezh is an ethereal realm that one experiences not visually but from within. Along the way are familiar Tcherniakov tropes: provocative aphorisms begin key scenes. Elemental imagery includes fire for purging, water for cleansing and earth for healing. Plot liberties are thoughtful.

The committed theatricality of the cast (which has the luxury of some major singers in minor roles) goes far to making the production convincing on its own terms, especially tenor Maxim Aksenov's vocally hail, boyish prince, John Daszak's devoured-from-within madness as Grishka and, most of all, Svetlana Ignatovich as Fevroniya, a long role that she portrays with a nervous air of often joyful expectation and sings without strain or fatigue. This could be a career-making performance – and one achieved with the inspired support of the Netherlands Philharmonic Orchestra under Marc Albrecht. David Patrick Stearns

A Scarlatti

Carlo re d'Alemagna	
Romina Basso contr	Lotario
Roberta Invernizzi sop	Giuditta
Marina de Liso mez	Gildippe
Marianne Beate Kielland mez	Adalgiso
Carlo Allemano ten	Berardo
Josè Maria Lo Monaco mez	Asprando
Damiana Pinti contr	Armilla
Roberto Abbondanza bass	Bleso
Charles and Community and Overlanding / Fa	alaia Diamali

Stavanger Symphony Orchestra / Fabio Biondi Agogique (9) (3) AGOO15 (169' • DDD • T/t)



Agogique's deficient booklet-notes lack an adequate synopsis and offer only scant

information about the historical context and musical elements of Scarlatti's Carlo re

d'Alemagna. The first performance took place at the Teatro San Bartolomeo in Naples on January 26, 1716, and the original cast included Senesino (Lotario) and Durastanti (Giuditta), just a few years before both worked for Handel in London. The infant Carlo is a silent role who never sings; his succession to his late father's throne is the dispute on which the drama turns. His much older half-brother Lotario vearns for the throne, as he makes very clear in the opening scene (the amiable aria with horns 'Del ciel su i giri risplenda il sole', sung eloquently by Romina Basso); he doubts the legitimacy of Carlo and attempts to discredit his widowed stepmother Giuditta – but a spanner is thrown in the machinations when it becomes clear that Adalgiso (Lotario's son) and Gildippe (Giuditta's daughter from a previous marriage) will not renounce their love. Lotario eventually repents his tyranny and enlightened order is restored.

Notwithstanding some mercurial quirks, Fabio Biondi ensures that the moderninstrument Stavanger Symphony Orchestra play in a competent Baroque style. Marianne Beate Kielland excels in Adalgiso's numerous tender love arias and the lament 'Se la bella tortorella' (a reaction to his father's wrath). Romina Basso's limpid lyricism in 'Aure voi che, susarrando' suggests that Lotario has a sensitive side, which contrasts neatly with the bellicose response of the true villain Asprando ('Già il mio cor di fede', a concise trumpet aria sung brilliantly by Josè Maria Lo Monaco). Giuditta's emotional distress in Act 2 is characterised compellingly by Roberta Invernizzi: she bids farewell to her infant son Carlo as she sends him into hiding (the anguished 'L'innocenza in te vegg'io'), but the drama rapidly intensifies when she discovers she has sent him into a perilous trap; the animated vengeance aria 'Miei fidi a vendetta' breaks down into icy slower passages in which she imagines she sees the ghost of her son. Basso's agile divisions are superb in Lotario's furious 'Tiranno, sì', at which point the character seems beyond the reach of reason, but there is sublime clarity when he eventually recognises the virtue of his defiant son in 'Riede quest'alma in calma'. Scarlatti's lighter touch for Neapolitan comedy is also evident in scenes for the flirtatious servants Bleso and Armilla that conclude each act. David Vickers

Schreker

Die Gezeichneten	
Robert Brubaker ten	Alviano Salvago
Anja Kampe sop	Carlotta Nardi
Martin Gantner bar	Count Vitelozzo Tamare

Bridge M ③ BRIDGE9400 (170' • DDD • T/t) Recorded live 2010



Between 1913 and 1915, as the First World War began to exert its stranglehold

on Europe, Franz Schreker worked on his most unremitting operatic study of the maimed and the mad. Its title is usually translated as 'The Stigmatised', indicating that all the main characters are wounded, damaged or otherwise flawed; doomed to strive for perfection in both art and life but also doomed to fail in that endeavour. The setting might be 16th-century Genoa but the atmosphere is entirely contemporary – or seems so a century later.

To judge from the applause heard at the beginning and end of the third act, this 2010 Los Angeles Opera staging hit the audience's collective spot in just the way Schreker might have hoped for. Less grandly tragic than Strauss's Elektra, less starkly expressionistic than Berg's Wozzeck, it can't match either of these operatic masterworks in dramatic conviction or musical quality. But – as the closing stages of Act 1 show with particular eloquence -Schreker could sometimes manage to temper melodrama with tenderness, obsessiveness with genuine humanity. As the wayward aristocratic painter Carlotta, Anja Kampe goes beyond mere flamboyance to offer welcome light and shade; Robert Brubaker has both the stamina and the range of vocal character to make the 'ugly hunchback' Alviano - rich but deranged, whose portrait Carlotta works on, and whose life she destroys by engineering her own destruction - more than a pathetic, cartoonish clown. With sometimes stentorian but always vigorously engaged support from Martin Gantner and James Johnson, this is a powerfully realised success for the whole LA ensemble.

Schreker's tendency to shy away from the kind of more song-like episodes that allow the greatest German operas to achieve a distinctive kind of transcendence places particular demands on the conductor. James Conlon seems to recognise that the composer was in his element with action rather than reflection, and drives the music forwards with just enough flexibility to avoid monotony and an unfailing attention to balancing the often weighty orchestration against the

vocal declamation. The ending – a strange kind of cross between *Rigoletto* and *Erwartung* – is handled with just the right mix of restraint and forcefulness.

Arnold Whittall

Wagner · Dietsch

Dietsch Le vaisseau fantôme	
Russell Braun bar	Troïl
Sally Matthews sop	Minna
Bernard Richter ten	Magnus
Ugo Rabec bass	Barlow
Eric Cutler ten	Éric
Mika Kares bass	Scriften
Wagner Der fliegende Holländer (Paris version)	
Evgeny Nikitin bass-bar	Dutchman
Ingela Brimberg sop	Senta
Mika Kares bass	Donald (Daland)
Eric Cutler ten	Georg (Erik)
Helene Schneiderman mez	Mary
Bernard Richter ten	Steersman
Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir;	

Les Musiciens du Louvre / Marc Minkowski

Naïve ® 4 V5349 (4h 22' • DDD)



Attempting to interest the Paris Opéra in a *Fliegende Holländer* composed by him,

Wagner (in 1839) was told bluntly that music by a 'stubborn idiot, assailing us with impossible ideas' was not wanted for 'at least seven years' (ironically the length of the phantom Dutchman's obligatory term at sea). However, the Opéra's director thought enough of Wagner's sketch of the story's drama to buy it from him. It was passed over to playwright, critic and novelist Paul-Henri Foucher (Victor Hugo's brother-in-law) and Benédict-Henri Révoil to make into a libretto for Pierre-Louis Philippe Dietsch, composer, instrumentalist and now chorusmaster at the Opéra.

This important release finally gives us the chance to hear Dietsch and Foucher's Le vaisseau fantôme, ou Le maudit des mers. It does show the influence of Wagner's sketch. The heroine Minna sings a ballad of the phantom sailor Troïl (Act 1, 'Il est un cap que Dieu garde lui-même'), hoping for his redemption. Her problematic relationship with would-be husband Magnus (Act 1 duet 'Pourquoi, Magnus, seul avec moi') is dominated by his fears that she doesn't really love him. Minna's merchant father Barlow – arriving as in Wagner after a time away at sea – sings to her a self-justifying credo ('Ces doux talismans que j'aime') about riches and the suitability of a stranger (posing as a Swedish captain) to be her husband. And

when the wedding of Minna and Troïl is announced, a celebratory sailors' choral battle takes place, with the locals scared off by the lyrics and sound of the ghostly visitors.

Berlioz's review of the premiere was amused that the libretto was 'constantly sad' and recommended Dietsch make a clear choice from the many influences on him. Dietsch took much from Hérold's melodies, Meyerbeer's orchestration, Bizet's Symphony, bel canto cantilenas and even Der Freischütz. Le vaisseau fantôme does not seem at this point of listening to be a lost masterpiece with its own distinct musical identity.

The new Der fliegende Holländer is presented (like Deutsche Harmonia Mundi's 2005 recording under Bruno Weil) in what is becoming called the 'Paris' version of the opera – a single act with the three distinct Scottish geographical scenes joined by linking interludes. Senta's huntsman lover is called Georg, her father Donald; and the bay in which his ship is forced to shelter is Holystrand. The brasswriting is often thicker and heavier – the sudden arrival of the stranger Dutchman in Senta's house is established with a loud brass and timpani chord – and, starting with the Overture, there are plenty of the 'tremolando effects' famously criticised by Berlioz. There is nothing of the later harpdominated, Tristan-influenced 'redemption' in the music at the end of both Overture and final scene, just blunt, rather black chords to represent Senta's jump.

The matching of Minkowski and his regular orchestra to this repertoire – a period of music they know well and have regularly performed and recorded – is an idea of genius. As in his performances of the Symphonie fantastique (DG) and the Wesendonck-Lieder (with Anne-Sofie Otter on YouTube), he achieves a clever integration of slow tempi within a basically swift framework. Sally Matthews's Minna has excellent French and well-studied dramatic projection of the role. Evgeny Nikitin's Holländer ideally balances neurosis with mystery. Minkowski's players (partly on historical instruments) ensure a lack of the overblown heaviness that mars the recordings of Solti and Karajan.

Mike Ashman

Wagner – selected comparison: Weil (5/05) (DHM) 82876 64071-2

Wagner

Rienzi	
Peter Bronder ten	Rienz
Christiane Libor sop	Irene
Falk Struckmann bass-bar	Steffano Colonna
Claudia Mahnke mez	Adriand



Bernd Loebe's Frankfurt company and their music director Sebastian

Weigle have enriched the Wagner discography this past year with new performances of the three early operas. As used to be the case with Verdi on record, no Rienzi (save the still officially unissued nor properly remastered Holy Grail of Sir Edward Downes's 1976 radio performance) is complete – and all are cut differently. The present performance follows one of several bad traditions - a 'musical arrangement' is credited – by making not-so-short snips in Acts 1, 2 (the 'Rape of Lucretia' ballet reduced to soundbites) and 4, and massacring Act 3: we get the aftermath of Rienzi's second (bloodthirsty) victory over nobles Colonna and Orsini but none of the intriguingly forward-looking choral writing that limns the actual battle.

Frankfurt has been an important staging post in the move towards more heroic roles of Anglo-German tenor Peter Bronder. This Rienzi follows a successful Palestrina (9/12). If Bronder lacks the last ounce of heroic razzmatazz with which, say, René Kollo was able to invest this role (for EMI and Orfeo), there is not a note or tone in this impressive reading which is not convincingly struck. His colleagues are in like form, especially Mahnke's Adriano (surely the *beau rôle* of this piece), Struckmann's Colonna and Beau Gibson as the side-switching bourgeois Baroncelli.

Taken down from two concerts last May, this is the most exciting Rienzi we have yet on disc (although the Steinberg Toulouse DVD – Opus Arte, 11/13 – is potently conducted too). Weigle's Overture, alternately lithe, light and pacy or lingering without sentiment, flags up that his direction of the piece is much more in the style of the 1830s/'40s and of the two earlier operas he has led than the overblown Solti or the circus fun of Tennstedt's swinging marches. Recording quality is excellent. A big recommendation - but, please, the Downes in proper sound, someone? Mike Ashman



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GRAMOPHONE Focus

JANOWSKI CLOSES THE RING

Mike Ashman listens to the final instalment in Marek Janowski's Wagner survey and re-evaluates his Ring in the light of the new Götterdämmerung



Edith Haller (Gutrune), Lance Ryan, Petra Lang and Markus Brück (Gunther) in Janowski's Götterdämmerung

hen you include off-air issues available online, there are now more than 50 complete Ring cycles available, not to mention over 100 further issues of individual operas. Wagner Year 2013's contribution to these figures was the appearance of a further nine performances of the cycle, either complete or in progress. Of these the ones conducted by Christian Thielemann (DG, Wiener Staatsoper), Daniel Barenboim (ArtHaus DVD, La Scala) and Marek Janowski (Pentatone) represented their second recordings of the cycle, while Rudolf Kempe (Myto and Opera Depot) is actually now on his sixth.

As reported regularly in *Gramophone*, Janowski's new *Ring* is the climax of a two-year sequence of concert recordings of the mature Wagner operas with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra. Inevitably, not all these performances have been equally successful and the *Ring* comes up against strong competition from his 1980/83 cycle (now reissued by Sony and still sounding well) with the Dresden Staatskapelle and a cast that those addicted to the theory that the past always did it better might find dream-like: Theo Adam's Wotan, Peter Schreier's Mime, Matti Salminen's Hagen, Siegfried Jerusalem's Siegmund...

Here already were many attributes of Janowski's Wagner, which he has continued to develop. They include a fresh (as in free of tradition), light and generally swift traversal of each opera and, in casting, an interest more in vocal colour, individuality and rightness for the role's character than in sheer weight of tone or safety for its own sake in matters of tessitura. All of which means there will be risks. In 1980/83 there were the debuts of Schreier as Loge and the *Siegfried Mime* (a success), the still thought to be light-of-voice Kollo as Siegfried (worth it for the vocal acting alone) and Jeannine Altmeyer's Brünnhilde (controversial, but the sound and timbre of such a young singer bring dramatic advantages in her scenes with father Wotan and Siegfried).

Has it worked a second time? Janowski's 'gambles' have often centred on the same roles. His Loge and Mimes are Christian Elsner, whom he also cast as his Parsifal. Once again the conductor's choice is as far away as possible from the whining eccentricities of a character actor (like Gerhard Stolze) in these roles and once again - this is true too of Schreier's Mime - although it's never less than 'musical', there is a degree of over-beautiful, Lieder-like singing which means that the drama doesn't exactly come out at you from the loudspeakers. The Siegfrieds and Brünnhildes are now split. For Siegfried Janowski has opted for the reliability of Christian Thielemann's go-to Bayreuth and Vienna candidate Stephen Gould, and encouraged him to rethink much; for Götterdämmerung there's Lance Ryan, who certainly has all the notes, tends to force for effect and

is a voice that the microphones don't especially love. A similar situation obtains with the Brünnhildes. In Walküre and Götterdämmerung we hear the always interesting, risk-taking Petra Lang a singer whose obvious interpretative intelligence can sound like a combination of Anja Silja and Martha Mödl but who does not (at least from these performances) record comfortably and who early on in the evenings can be under the note. But, whatever her problems in projecting some of the role's tessitura, there is never for a second a doubt about where and how Lang is dramatically. For the higher Siegfried role Janowski has gone with the colour and enthusiasm of Violeta Urmana: there's a little strain but it's an undoubted success.

Elsewhere, for Wotan, Janowski – instead of the always more baritonal Theo Adam – has now opted for the darker colours of Tomasz Konieczny. This singer also can take a little time in each evening's performance to rise from the black colour of his former Alberich assumptions but he's certainly a potent god with a good grasp of text. And...Hagen is the ubiquitous (and seemingly immortal) Matti Salminen, still a committed powerhouse of evil and now, age notwithstanding, fielding greater subtlety in the mocking of the Vassals' scene and richer experience of how to focus his tone throughout.

The new Janowski Götterdämmerung is well played by the Berlin orchestra, remains pacy and exciting throughout, and the casting – if not catalogue-beating – is both classy and worth listening to. But, like other parts of the cycle, the colour and motor of the performance is lacking in what I can only describe as evil grandeur. Maybe not a fashionable or even 'nice' attribute: but there is a lot of it in these scores – when the 'baddies' Hagen or Alberich think they're winning, or even (earlier in the cycle) when Wotan thinks his plan of getting back the ring via his children is working. This is not a weapon in Janowski's armoury - I suspect he does not want it to be - although it is in Krauss's (Pristine), Kempe's (I prefer his final Stockholm Ring on Opera Depot), Barenboim's (Warner or last year's Proms broadcasts) and Goodall's (Chandos). For that reason alone, their Rings are a more complete dramatic listening experience than this attractively recorded newcomer. **G**



THE RECORDING

Wagner Götterdämmerung Sols; Berlin RSO / Janowski Pentatone (M) (4) (59) PTC5186 409

REPLAY

Rob Cowan's monthly survey of historic reissues and archive recordings

Broadcast revelations from a new label

Meloclassic is dedicated to issuing fascinating historical radio broadcasts never before released on CD

ccording to its website, Meloclassic is a 'non-profit organisation dedicated to releasing previously unissued historical recordings of live radio performances and broadcasts'. The first thing to say is that the material, or most of it, is of exceptional artistic interest and the sound (which is for the most part extremely clean) is thankfully free of excessive filtering. Granted, there's the odd unwanted gap between movements and one or two occasions where announcements come perilously close to gatecrashing the musical performance, but these and other minor hiccups are easily dealt with on playback. So no real problems overall.

Starting among string players, Christian Ferras is represented by Bach's Second and Third Solo Violin Sonatas in performances that combine grit and

'Free-spirited is the only word for Yvonne Loriod's rendition of Schumann'

rapture, a sensually alluring *Devil's Trill* Sonata and a typically expressive rendition of Mozart's Sonata, K526, the two accompanied works featuring Ferras's regular duo partner, the pianist Pierre Barbizet.

Pre-war recordings by Henry Merckel, who led the Paris Opera Orchestra for nearly 40 years, are impressive for their combination of tonal sweetness and Gallic elegance. Meloclassic's coupling of Brahms's Concerto (Jean Fournet, 1953) and Paganini's Second (Manuel Rosenthal, 1958) displays similar qualities, though Merckel's technique is less certain than it had been years earlier. The Brahms has real spring and spirit

(Fournet's conducting is memorably dramatic) while the 'Rondo à la clochette' finale of the Paganini trips off the bow with a lightness and agility that reminded me of Váša Příhoda in his prime.

Lovers of quality string quartet playing will surely rejoice at the appearance of a 1951 live recording by the Busch Quartet, Brahms's C minor Quartet featuring a darkly shaded *Allegretto*, more or less in line with its 1932 EMI predecessor tempo-wise but infinitely more sorrowful. Beethoven's C sharp minor Quartet is in all honesty less impressive than its pre-war predecessor (the opening Adagio is less intense than before and the Scherzo is a little shaky) but, as with the Brahms, treasurable moments abound and fans of this matchless ensemble should not hold back.

Meloclassic's trawl of pianists is highly impressive. I've long treasured Alexander Borovsky's recordings of Bach's French and English Suites, as well as his Liszt Hungarian Rhapsodies. A Paris recital from 1953 opens with an imposing account of the Bach/Liszt Fantasia and Fugue, BWV542, then proceeds with Bach's Fifth French Suite (listen to how Borovsky edges, ever so gently, from the end of the Sarabande to the beginning of the Gavotte). There's a quirky Beethoven Op 101 and pieces by Brahms, Chopin and Liszt.

Free-spirited is the only word for **Yvonne Loriod**'s rendition of the Schumann *Fantasie*, while other highlights of this artistically valuable programme include two movements from Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit* ('Le gibet' is mesmerising) and pieces from *Iberia* by Albéniz, the close of 'Almería' being another highlight.

As to Meloclassic's remaining catalogue, there's much that I would love to hear, including CDs featuring Kempff, Richter-Haaser, Backhaus, Monique Haas, Arthur Grumiaux, Erik Friedman and many more, while the list of potential releases is equally if not more mouth-watering: Jeanne-Marie Darré, Joseph Pembaur, George Enescu, the Végh Quartet and so on – more than I have the space to list.

There are no notes and the packaging (CD-size cases using DVD casing material) is no more than adequate but this is a truly extraordinary series and I look forward to hearing further releases in the not too distant future.

THE RECORDINGS



Bach. Mozart. Tartini Ferras vn Barbizet pf Meloclassic (M) MC2001



Brahms. Paganini Merckel vn Toulouse SO; Paris RSO / Fournet; Rosenthal Meloclassic (§) MC2011



Brahms. Beethoven Busch Quartet Meloclassic (M) MC4000



Bach. Beethoven. Brahms. Chopin. Liszt Borovsky pf Meloclassic (M) MC1020



Albéniz. Ravel. Schumann Loriod pf Meloclassic (M) MC1018

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122 GRAMOPHONE APRIL 2014



Alexander Borovsky: his 1953 recital has been rel

'The most lucid, dramatic and intense Beethoven cycle ever captured by recorded sound.' Annotator Christopher Dyment's claim is made in full knowledge of **Arturo Toscanini**'s extensive Beethoven symphony discography, both official and unofficial; and whatever one's take on Beethoven interpretation, this latest digital transfer of the legendary 1939 NBC/Toscanini cycle must rank among the most significant documents of its kind ever issued.

It has a predecessor in Music & Arts' 2007 release of the same material (CD1203 – 10/07), which sounds subtly different. The latest release witnesses a lightening of the bass and some useful aural cleansing (also an improvement over the Naxos issues in this respect): sample, by way of comparisons, the start of the *Eroica*'s Funeral March or near the opening of the *Pastoral*'s 'Storm', where an annoying cough has been excised. The previous incarnation is best in the Second Symphony – as imposing a statement of the score as we have from anyone – where an extra degree of tonal body adds to the impact.

By and large this latest release makes for an easier, less scruffy listen than its various predecessors and with performances that pack such a powerful punch, unsullied concentration is important. As to the performances, there's little that I can say that hasn't been said a thousand times before. Only the First Symphony's first movement strikes me as overly hurried and some might take exception to Toscanini's barnstorming approach to the Ninth's opening Allegro (hardly ma non troppo); but as for the rest, the joyous Fourth (with firstmovement repeat), the highly animated Pastoral, the iron-fisted Fifth and the exuberant accounts of the Sixth and Seventh, all are wonderful, and thank goodness that for this new set (which also includes the Overtures Leonore Nos 1-3 and Egmont), the applause has been separately tracked. An unquestionable benchmark and in purely interpretative terms

infinitely more impressive than Toscanini's post-war cycle as issued by RCA, fine as that is.

THE RECORDING



Beethoven Symphonies Nos 1-9. Overtures NBC SO / Toscanini Music & Arts (M) (S) CD1275

Dorati's Nutcracker

Mercury set the ball rolling by releasing Antal Dorati's dynamic Minneapolis Symphony recording of Tchaikovsky's complete Swan Lake ballet, passing on contemporaneous versions of The Sleeping Beauty and The Nutcracker because Dorati went on to re-record them in stereo (in the case of The Nutcracker, twice). Opus Kura has made remarkably clean transfers of both recordings from well-preserved LP originals. The Sleeping Beauty is already available on two CDs (OPK7066/7) and now The Nutcracker joins it on just one, a swift, tautly played

performance, conforming sound-wise to the Mercury template of the day (reedy woodwinds, rasping brass, explosive big drums and strings that trade tonal lustre for edge).

This first Dorati *Nutcracker* is chockfull of passion, the second act especially, though the close of the first act is hardly less dynamic. If you own either its Doratiled LSO or Concertgebouw successors, you can expect an extra shot of adrenaline in Minneapolis. Filtering has been kept to an absolute minimum and – short of having a cleaned up, 'masters'-derived transfer from Mercury itself – this is about as good as it's likely to get.

THE RECORDING



Tchaikovsky The Nutcracker Minneapolis SO / Dorati Opus Kura © OPK7070

Reynaldo Hahn mélodies

Lovers of French operetta, musical comedy and *mélodies* will rejoice at the appearance of a seven-disc Forlane set featuring vintage performances of music by **Reynaldo Hahn**, most charmingly by Hahn himself, gently singing 20 *mélodies* to his own piano accompaniment. The musical comedy *Mozart* (to a libretto by Sacha Guitry), and the operettas *Brummel* and *Malvina* are included complete with dialogue, the latter featuring the bewitching Lina Dachary in the title-role with Jacques Jansen as Valérien, alias Jules.

There are excerpts from *The Merchant* of Venice (Martial Singher, André Pernet, Fanny Heldy) and La dame aux camélias (Roger Bourdon et al), and there's the Pastorale de Noël. Readers 'without French' will be listening largely for the sake of the delightful music: there are no librettos or translations included, just a French note on Hahn and a list of contents. Language, however, isn't a problem in the case of the Piano Sonatina and Concerto, both wittily played by Magda Tagliaferro. As to the operettas, skipping the dialogue (which is invariably separately tracked) will allow uninterrupted access to the music, which is a pure joy. Good transfers.

THE RECORDING



Reynaldo Hahn

Incl Mélodies, Mozart, Brummel, Malvina, Pastorale de Noël Forlane ® ⑦ FOR17003

Books



Jeremy Nicholas on a study of Jascha Heifetz's early years:

'An exhaustively researched narrative of how one of the most amazing musical prodigies became one of the greatest violinists in history.'



David Fanning reviews Stephen Walsh's 'Musorgsky and his Circle':

'Walsh is superb on Musorgsky – hardly a single song or piano miniature is touched on without a flash of new illumination'

Jascha Heifetz

Early Years in Russia By Galina Kopytova, translated and edited by Dario and Alexandra Sarlo

Indiana University Press, HB, 504pp, £29.99 ISBN 978-0-253-01076-6



'Born in Russia, first lessons at three, debut in Russia at seven, debut in America in 1917. That's all that

needs to be said,' was Heifetz's succinct summary of his early years. No biography of Heifetz I have come across has dealt in detail with this period of his life, one which he viewed with discomfort and as having 'a dark side'. This outstanding volume corrects that omission and provides us with an accurate and exhaustively researched narrative of how one of the most amazing musical prodigies became one of the greatest violinists in history.

First published in Russia in 2004 under the title Jascha Heifetz in Russia: From the History of the Musical Culture of the Silver Age, its author, Galina Kopytova, is head of the Office of Manuscripts of the Russian Institute for the History of Arts in St Petersburg. Researching in the mid-1980s the personal archive of Viktor Valter (1865-1935), a violinist and music critic who was to have a notable influence on Heifetz, she came across a folder of correspondence signed by a certain R Heifetz and his son Joseph. Realising what she had unearthed, she published her exciting discovery in 1991 (the 90th anniversary of Heifetz's birth) and shortly afterwards was contacted by the late Robert Heifetz, the violinist's eldest son. He and his wife worked alongside and financially supported Kopytova as she created the book. It has, in other words, the stamp of erudite scholarship and authenticity. As to this translation by the husband-and-wife team of Dario and Alexandra Sarlo, the best I can say about it is that you cannot tell it is a translation. But it is more than that, for the Sarlos have updated the English edition

with new research and sources while wisely excising a chapter on Heifetz's 1934 tour of the Soviet Union, in order to maintain the focus on Heifetz's childhood.

Heifetz, according to the Vilnius birth register, was born on January 20, 1901 (there has been some controversy about this: the 1994 RCA/BMG collection of his recordings, for instance, gave it as 1900). He was named Joseph (Yosif) but early on was known affectionately as 'Josinka', 'Jasinka' or more often as 'Jaschenka' which somehow then became 'Jascha', a diminutive usually associated with Jacob (Yakov). His early concerts referred to him as 'Joseph Heifetz' but before long it was 'Jascha'. Paradoxically, in later life only a few close friends were allowed to call him this. It was either 'Mr Heifetz', 'Mr H' or just 'Heifetz'. (The first time he was billed as 'Mr Heifetz', incidentally, was aged nine, when he performed the Wieniawski D minor Concerto.) At least four other Auer pupils became known professionally by their diminutives: Mischa Elman, Katyusha Sorokin, Sascha Dubyansky and Toscha Seidel. And it was, of course, the great Leopold Auer who was the most influential figure in the young prodigy's development, though, as Kopytova makes abundantly clear, he was lucky in his earlier mentors - his father Ruvin Heifetz, Ilya Malkin (Vilnius) and Ioannes Nalbandian, Auer's assistant at the St Petersburg Conservatoire.

One can gauge the awe with which the cherubic youngster with golden curls was viewed by the annual exam markings for Nalbandian's class in April 1911 for which '5' was the exceptionally awarded top mark. Glazunov, the Conservatoire's director, wrote '5++. Beyond competition'. Nalbandian refused to give a grade, noting simply 'Talent by the grace of God, phenomenal success'. Parallel with the Heifetz narrative, Kopytova offers a colourful portrait of the social and musical milieu of the various countries to which the young Heifetz travelled, alongside a potted political history where relevant. The list of names, some familiar, others long-forgotten, provides some delicious discoveries. Did

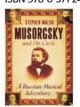
you know that Emanuel Bay (1891-1967), who was to make over 100 recordings with Heifetz, first partnered the violinist as early as 1910 when Heifetz gave his first performance of Paganini's Concerto No 1? (This and the Ernst Concerto are just two of his childhood specialities he never recorded.)

The texts of dozens of postcards and letters, the equivalent of today's emails and text messages, give an insight into the boy's personality. How sunny and generous it emerges compared with the sour mean-spiritedness of later years. The author seems to have gathered together every review of Heifetz's European concerts to 1917, many of them so laudatory that the family kept them from Jascha's eyes. One in particular, by Nikolai Bernstein from the Petersburgskaia Gazeta of April 9, 1912, stands out. It is one of the best descriptions of Heifetz's playing: 'His inner world is not reflected in his deep eyes, but his violin wails with hot tears and conveys in such a genuine manner that which is experienced in moments of genuine suffering and prayerful ecstasy.'

The book has 60 pages of black-and-white photos, many never previously published, while the valuable appendices have reviews of Heifetz's historical 1917 Carnegie Hall debut and a year-by-year list of his repertoire in Russia. We must hope that someone, perhaps the violin-loving Sarlos, will be commissioned to write an account of Heifetz's American years. Jeremy Nicholas

Musorgsky and his Circle

A Russian Musical Adventure By Stephen Walsh Faber, HB, 496pp, £30 ISBN 978-0-571-24562-8



The story of how five amateurs came together to define new directions in Russia's musical life is often

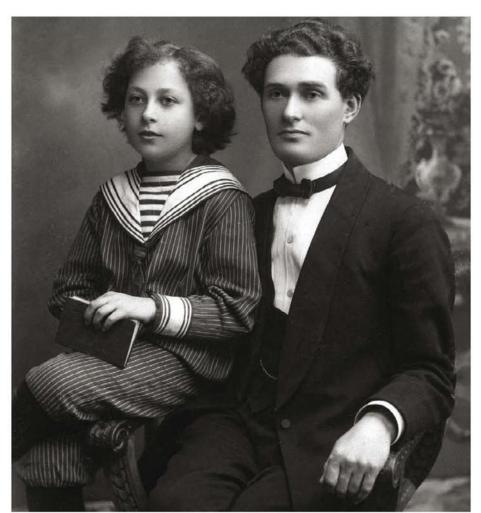
told, but usually at second or third hand, generally with the focus on one individual, and rarely in a way that does justice to the

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month-by-month unfolding of events. Stephen Walsh's new book steps into the breach with an admirably researched and beautifully written account, which should be the first port of call for anyone requiring reliable information and a rounded understanding of what motivated and constrained these remarkably gifted yet fatally flawed composers.

As a group their activities were more short-lived than often realised. When in 1867 Vladimir Stasov christened them Moguchaya kuchka (literally 'Mighty Little Heap', though 'Mighty Handful' is a perfectly acceptable equivalent), there was little to justify the title beyond high aspirations, a few small-scale gems and a significant number of ambitious but largely incomplete projects. And as early as 1871, when Rimsky-Korsakov accepted a professorship at the St Petersburg Conservatoire, their credentials as anti-academic pragmatists began to fade. Individually there were still some astonishing achievements to follow: operas and symphonies finished (or nearly so) against all the odds, and some unlikely syntheses of influences from Schumann, Berlioz, Liszt and folksong hammered out. But squabbles and chronic 'distractability' (Walsh's highlighting of Mussorgsky's self-assessment) were never far from the surface; and in the end, drink, religiosity, pedagogical drudgery, workaholic multitasking and mediocre short-windedness put paid to the 'Russian Musical Adventure' of Mussorgsky, Balakirev, Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin and Cui, respectively. As Walsh summaries it: 'At bottom, the crude fact is that these interesting composers talked a lot but composed rather little, and often what they composed does not measure up to what they said about it' (page 407). Yet what he has to say about the entire gamut of their work is of compelling interest.

As a seasoned commentator on Stravinsky and his antecedents, Walsh is superb on Mussorgsky. Hardly a single song or piano miniature is touched on without a flash of new illumination, and the fact that he can be dismissive of some of these pieces only lends credibility to his enthusiasm for others. Walsh's lexicon of critical put-downs is entertaining in its own right but he has strong rivals among critics of the time, such as Hermann Laroche on Mussorgsky's 'Sunless': 'From the keys of the accompanying piano there glows a kind of stream of musical sewage, as if a girl in a boarding house were trying out a new piece without having noticed how many flats there were in the key signature.' But mud-slinging is not the arena Walsh is competing in. Instead his



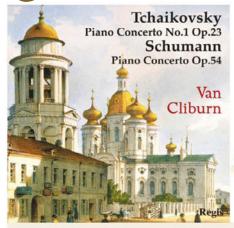
The 10-year-old Jascha Heifetz in late 1911, with the Vilnius musician and family friend Hyman Gerber

narrative takes on the greater challenge of tracing multiple interwoven careers, including those of Glinka, Dargomizhsky, Seroy, Anton Rubinstein and the young Tchaikovsky, as well as the Handful. In this he is as perceptive on their convergences as on their divergences, and his thumbnail sketches of the intellectuals and authors who inspired or were inspired by them is pinpoint accurate. Along the way umbrella terms such as realism and nationalism are as carefully probed for meaning as narrower technical ones, immeasurably helped by not playing the fashionable bash-your-academic-colleagues game. Titles are used correctly (such as St John's Night on Bald Mountain) without decrying their popular distortions, and no time is wasted on the Aunt Sally of Mussorgsky's supposed political progressivism, so beloved of Soviet commentators. Mirrorimage topics in the West – supposed homosexual leanings and anti-Semitism - are touched upon but deftly batted away. In place of all of these Walsh offers what he calls Mussorgsky's 'anthropological' interest in people (page 233), neatly wrapping up that side of the argument.

In a book of this length there are bound to be a few oddities. Borodin's opera-farce *The Bogatyrs*, for instance, is described as unpublished (page 145), when in fact the vocal score appeared in a handsome edition in 2004. A few personal preferences are rubbed up the wrong way; there may be no defending César Cui – the least talented composer and most vicious critic in the Kuchka – but he surely deserves a bouquet for his song 'The Statue at Tsarskoye Selo'. Early Tchaikovsky is effectively introduced but then rather fades from view as the decline and fall of the kuchka is described.

The book's presentation is considerate to the non-specialist reader but it could be even more so. Though Russian terms are helpfully explained, if you miss them first time around, the index doesn't always help you out (and if you want to find a key word such as 'nationalism', you have to look under 'Russia' and 'Stasov'). Disappointingly, there are no musical examples. Infuriatingly, references are given as endnotes rather than footnotes. All this would be fine for a book to be read once and put aside. But for something as authoritative and valuable as this, it's a pity. **David Fanning**

Classics RECONSIDERED





Jed Distler and Jeremy Nicholas assess the million-selling recording of the concerto with which Van Cliburn made his name in Moscow



Tchaikovsky

Piano Concerto No 1, Op 23 Van Cliburn pf **RCA SO / Kirill Kondrashin**RCA RB16073 (8/58)

(now available on Regis ® RRC1391)
The first International Tchaikovsky
Competition took place in Moscow last
April. The sessions were held in public, and
when in the finals the Texan (6ft 4 in) Van
Cliburn had finished, 'the crowd went wild,
chanting in unison, "First-prize! Firstprize!" for their adored favourite, who by
now had become universally known as
"Vanyúsha" or "Ványitchka". So the
sleeve-note says. Nevertheless the judges

still felt able to award Ványitchka the first prize, and recognition tempered with ecstasy followed immediately in London and New York.

Van Cliburn's recorded performance of the concerto is a very good one. He certainly brings enormous power to the many sections of the music which respond readily to it, yet is happily content to keep the power in reserve elsewhere. Always he phrases effectively, and always a faultless technique allows an agreeable delicacy in figuration. Kondrashin and Van Cliburn shape the music well, and not by any means only with the requirements of virtuoso

pianism in mind; some passages indeed are taken rather more deliberately than is customary (and are the gainers from it).

The recording is well balanced, but somewhat harsh in tone. The piano, in particular, is affected; at its louder moments the clang can become unpleasant (it does so in the octave run-up to the final peroration). RCA sleeves are seldom noticeable for their modesty; this one might have done well not to add to the usual 'Orthophonic' puff, to which we are by now nearly acclimatised, an extra and actively misleading one about the disc's stereophonic adaptability.

Malcolm Macdonald (8/58)

Jed Distler Fifty-six years and hundreds of 'Tchaik One' recordings later, the millionselling Van Cliburn performance remains as very good, if not necessarily better than Gramophone's original reviewer observed. The pianist's full-bodied, assured grasp of the introduction's famous crashing chords quickly grab your attention, although the violin section's eloquently phrased main theme makes you listen, with its discreet, vocally ornamented slides. Is that conductor Kirill Kondrashin's doing, or because the so-called RCA Symphony Orchestra was an adept pick-up group culled from New York's first-call freelancer's pool? Cliburn soon abandons the accelerando at bar 32, which helps set the stage for a broader than usual plunge into the solo descending octaves, and leaves the orchestra unhinged on bar 36's second beat. However, orchestra and soloist bid farewell to the introduction's pedal-point ending in harmonious synchronicity; as the cellos play their variation of the opening theme, listen to gorgeously nuanced conversation between the ascending flute and clarinet triplets and

Cliburn's descending rejoinders. Then at the *Allegro con spirito*, the singing shape with which Cliburn shapes the rapid two-note octave phrases does not go unnoticed by the orchestra members, who respond in kind.

Jeremy Nicholas I haven't listened to this for many years – unlike Van Cliburn's live recording of Rachmaninov's Third Concerto with the Symphony of the Air and Kirill Kondrashin recorded during the same period following Van Cliburn's ticker-tape welcome home after winning the Tchaikovsky Competition. With all its fluffs and smudges and moments of ensemble imprecision, I am still moved and excited by this performance. It has a real sense of occasion and edge-of-seat drama. In fact, it has all the qualities I think are missing from this studio recording of Tchaikovsky's First.

Of course it was the Tchaikovsky and not the Rachmaninov that was in everyone's collection, the first classical LP to become a million seller. To my mind it should have been the other way round!

One of the reasons why I am less enthusiastic than you - not entirely unenthusiastic, let's be clear, but less enthusiastic – is epitomised by one of the moments you highlight in the opening pages. Malcolm Macdonald in his original Gramophone review used the word 'deliberate' which, to me, translates as 'you are about to hear a sober, perfectly executed, but not extraordinary performance'. This sobriety is underlined by, as you point out, Van Cliburn pulling back on the accelerando at bar 32 and its successors. It's a request that gives the soloist an early opportunity to build tension and establish the soloist's heroic credentials: Rubinstein with Barbirolli, for example, Graffman and Szell, and of course Horowitz and Toscanini. Van Cliburn seems a reluctant hero.

But let's go on from bar 110. I like the way this goes. We're 4'20" in, and the ears have adjusted to the rather boxy sound and, in a way, this helps the clarity of the solo woodwind and brass writing. Also, one is already aware of what a very fine

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Van Cliburn playing Tchaikovsky in the Moscow State Conservatory's Grand Hall in 1962

accompanist Kondrashin is (how many times must he have conducted this concerto previously?).

JD Perhaps the central movement better reflects a meeting of minds between soloist and conductor. Their tempo for the opening Andantino semplice is animated without feeling rushed; listen to the gently droning bassoons supporting the horn, oboe and clarinet solos as Cliburn's chord playing takes the lead and steps back in true chamber music fashion. There's an inspired textural effect where Tchaikovsky requests that the piano's accompanying chords remain staccato when the solo cello takes up the theme, although Cliburn's legato touch misses the point. Cliburn's passagework in the middle *Prestissimo* section is not quite so clearly delineated to make its leggerissimo impact (in contrast to Clifford Curzon's Decca recording from only a few months later, for example), Kondrashin's ballet background certainly informs the supple phrasing of the muted viola theme. Still,

Cliburn does let loose in the little cadenza, followed by an eloquent, songful transition back into Tempo I, capped by a gorgeous trill. I suspect that this is the kind of controlled Romanticism that perked up the ears of Tchaikovsky competition jurors like Gilels and Richter.

JN Yes, I agree – though those opening pizzicato string chords might have benefitted from a second take, though with only four hours available (12.00-4.00am) understandable. They are much cleaner on the Moscow Philharmonic / Kondrashin [Melodiya MELCD1001627] recording made directly after the Moscow competition. Apropos this, it's interesting that Cliburn wanted to go back the day after the Moscow session and retake the *Prestissimo* section, but Kondrashin thought it wasn't necessary. On the RCA recording he still has not quite nailed it with the airy nonchalance that others bring to it.

The last movement strikes me as the most successful of the three but with the

exception of the final pages which are thrillingly executed (the timpani crescendo in bar 255 is a small example) for me, again, it says nothing beyond 'good studio recording'. I'm more aware of the piano's forward placement in this movement; the clarinets and horns don't get much of a look in (the Melodiya balance is better, though in a terribly washy acoustic). For comparison, take a look at the film of Cliburn and Kondrashin playing this movement after the competition on YouTube. Here there is a real frisson, a feeling that you are hearing something rather special (by the way, was Khrushchev really there or was he just edited in?). The finale on this RCA recording does not generate the same excitement ...

JD ...nor the same excitement as most of the other live finales with Cliburn floating around. Indeed, Cliburn's fellow Rosina Lhévinne pupil and Juilliard classmate John Browning's 1967 RCA Tchaikovsky recording beats Cliburn at his own game, with superior sound quality and more incisive orchestral playing by the London Symphony Orchestra under the young Seiji Ozawa. It's funny, when I interviewed Cliburn shortly before he took the Tchaikovsky on his 1994 'comeback' tour, I asked if he felt that his RCA recording reflected his current conception of the work. Cliburn said that he always stood by his recordings, because he knew that whatever he approved was going to be out there forever, so to speak. On the other hand, Cliburn did eventually sanction the live 1972 Moscow Brahms Second Concerto with Kondrashin for CD release that, to my mind, is far more animated, flexible and poetic than his relatively reticent studio version with Fritz Reiner.

Not to mention the sonically dodgy but musically fantastic Rachmaninov Second Sonata, also live from Moscow. In this sense I'm sorry that Cliburn did not remake his signature work under ideal conditions.

JN I wonder how much this recording's phenomenal popularity has relied on press hype and American patriotic fervour in the wake of Van Cliburn's Moscow triumph: 'all-American hero', 'one in the eye for the Ruskies', and all of that. One could hardly call it an unsuccessful recording – it is far from that – but a benchmark? I don't think so. **G**

THE SPECIALIST'S GUIDE TO...

Works for piano left hand

James Jolly selects 10 particularly remarkable works written for the pianist's left hand - some conceived as technical exercises, some written out of expediency for a one-armed pianist such as Paul Wittgenstein

f the majority of great piano virtuosos of the 19th century sought to give the impression that they had at least four hands, the really brave ones occasionally liked to raise the stakes and play with just one – but give the impression that they had 10 or maybe 15 fingers at their disposal. Danger, often gratuitous complexity and the technique with which to face it were all part of the virtuoso armoury – and countless pianist-composers rose to the challenge, those super-virtuosos Valentin Alkan (1813–88) and Leopold Godowsky (1870–1938) among them.

Not all composers approached writing for the left hand alone as the opportunity for jaw-dropping display; some found the challenge – restriction even – a fascinating opportunity to explore different colours (after all, the left hand, as you sit at the piano keyboard, naturally falls over the keys below middle C). Though, as Marc-André Hamelin, one of today's true virtuosos, points out, 'There is not much point in composing for one hand unless one tries to make the textures as rich as possible, and it is a special delight to try to make one hand sound like two.'

The first concerto for left hand was written in 1895 by the Hungarian Count Géza Zichy (1849-1924), who'd lost his right arm in a hunting accident; sadly, his inspiration didn't match up to his aspiration as a composer. But some years later, a host of compositions for left hand were commissioned by the Austrian-born pianist Paul Wittgenstein (1887-1961; brother of the celebrated philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein). He'd lost his right arm in the First World War and set about developing a repertoire that he could play: the most famous of the works he ushered into existence is Ravel's Concerto for the Left Hand, but he also extracted works from Korngold, Richard Strauss, Prokofiev and Britten. **G**



Pianist Paul Wittgenstein: had his right arm amputated in the First World War and went on to commission several composers, including Ravel, Richard Strauss and Britten

HOTOGBA BHX: BETTMANNAC



Dortkiewicz
Piano Concerto No 2 (1923)
Stefan Doniga pf
Janáček Philharmonic
Orchestra / David Porceliin

Netherlands Muziek Instituut (F) C13172 (5/09)

Very much in the Russian late-Romantic tradition (with a first-movement melody worthy of Rachmaninov), this work could win many converts to the Sergei Bortkiewicz cause, to which Doniga's driving interpretation is a fitting contribution. Written for Wittgenstein, it received a fair number of performances in the late 1920s and 1930s; but the pianist's exclusive rights meant that only he could perform it, greatly limiting its exposure.



Piano Concerto, Op 17 (1923)

Howard Shelley pf BBC

Philharmonic / Matthias Bamert

Chandos ® CHAN10433X (3/978)

As you'd expect from this composer, there are plenty of gorgeous melodies; and while Korngold doesn't always avoid having the piano part lurking in the bass clef, the work is very attractive in a high-calorie way! The pianist Gary Graffman has described it as a 'keyboard Salome' - and Howard Shelley plays up to that 100 per cent. If you like the Strauss reference, you could also try Strauss's Wittgenstein-commissioned Parergon zur Symphonia domestica and Panathenäenzug.



Britten

Diversions (1940)

Peter Donohoe pf City of Birmingham SO / Simon Rattle EMI (B) ② CZS573983-2 (11/91^R)

Another Wittgenstein commission, *Diversions* dates from Britten's time in the US. Wittgenstein had some reservations about the orchestration, but Britten refused to make changes. The work is a set of variations, with some wonderful inventive moments and sonorites (Variation I, for example, is magical; and the toccatas of Variation IX have a pulsing Prokofiev-like intensity and impetus). Donohoe and Rattle gave the work a really committed and convincing performance.



1 Alkan

Fantaisie in A flat, Op 76 No 1 (1838)

Marc-André Hamelin pf Hyperion (F) CDA66765 (3/95)

Lauded on its release, this live recording from the phenomenal Hamelin contains a superb performance of the three *Grandes études*, Op 76. No 1 is the one for left hand, and both composer and pianist manage the seemingly impossible: to use the pedal to fill out the texture but without creating a blur of sound. And considering that Hamelin does this live in concert (at Wigmore Hall in London), it's a triumph – and the music is very beautiful too.



Godowsky

Prelude and Fugue (1929)

Marc-André Hamelin pf

CBC Music Viva ® →

MVCD1026

Super-virtuoso pianist-composer Godowsky littered his jaw-dropping reworkings of the Chopin Etudes with studies for the left hand, but here he constructs a Prelude and Fugue on the well-used B-A-C-H motif. There's a wonderful dynamism and vitality in the Prelude, and the two-minute Fugue is a true feat of virtuosity. The latter must be astoundingly difficult to play - that is, unless you're Marc-André Hamelin, who makes it all sound so easy!



5 Saint-Saëns

Six études, Op 135 (1912)

Piers Lane pf

Hyperion © CDA67037 (2/99)

Works of characteristic flair

and finish, Saint-Saëns's six studies range over the full length of the keyboard and not only give the left hand a good workout in a powerful melodic role, but also inject a surprising level of wit into a small space. The spirit of the Baroque informs this suite (the Bourrée has a magical 48-bar section over a long drone on G). As in the hands of Chopin, the study here is elevated to something masterly and 'pure'.



Bartók

Study for the Left Hand, BB27 No 1 (1903)

Zoltán Kocsis pf

Decca © 8 478 2364 (7/97^R)

A reminder of what a superb pianist Bartók must have been, this first piece from a set of four has tremendous sweep and effortlessly achieves its goal of sounding like music for two (or possibly three) hands. In its nine minutes, Bartók engineers a huge variety of moods and sweeps up and down the keyboard creating a remarkably rich texture and musical weave. Kocsis not only plays it beautifully but also is totally inside the Bartók idiom.



Schmidt

Clarinet Quintet in A (1938) Aladár Jánoska c/ Stanislav Mucha vn Alexander Lakatos va

Ján Slávik vc Daniela Ruso pf

Naxos ® → 8 223414 (10/92^R)

Chamber music that requires a one-armed pianist is (not surprisingly) rather rare. (In fact, this recording uses Friedrich Wührer's two-hand-piano version.) Franz Schmidt wrote a number of works for Wittgenstein, including two fine clarinet quintets. This one, his second, is a substantial creation that's about an hour long. It is mellow, in a late Brahmsian language. Interestingly, the brief Intermezzo is for piano solo.



2 Hamelin

Etude No 7 (2006)

Marc-André Hamelin pf

Hyperion ® CDA67789 (A/10)

Hamelin joins the great left-hand

pianist-composer tradition with this reworking of Tchaikovsky's 'Lullaby' (Op 16, No 1). He writes that he first got to know the Tchaikovsky from accompanying singers, and one day it 'started rolling around in my head insistently...to the point where I had to do something about it'. Well, do something he did; and he manages to create a seemless transition throughout the length of the keyboard while never losing sight of the original's mood and spirit.





${\it Ravel}$ Piano Concerto for the Left Hand (1929-30)

Jean-Philippe Collard pf French National Orchestra / Lorin Maazel • EMI M → CDE574749-2 (11/O1)

The best-known work for left hand, this not only draws myriad colours from the piano but also employs an astounding orchestral palette that climbs upwards from the crepuscular and foreboding opening before the soloist sweeps in. Ravel had explored Saint-Saëns's studies for the left hand and displays the same skill in not overexploiting the piano's darker lower registers. As in the Saint-Saëns, there are episodes where

you'd be hard pressed to say how many hands (or fingers) are involved! The work responds to different interpretations: sinister and war-tinged, or infused by jazz. As David Gutman wrote, Collard's account is 'bright and vigorous'.



Visit the Gramophone Player at gramophone.co.uk to hear an excerpt from Collard's recording of Ravel's Concerto for the Left Hand

THE GRAMOPHONE COLLECTION

A 'splendid Mass' fit for a princess

Haydn's last Mass for the Esterházy family in 1802, and also his last completed score of all, was written for Princess Marie, to whom he was devoted. **Geraint Lewis** explores the history of the **Harmoniemesse** on disc

Fednesday, September 8, 1802. Splendid Mass, new and excellent music by the renowned Haydn and conducted by him. Nothing more beautiful or better performed. Afterwards at the castle a huge and magnificent dinner with music during the meal. A toast to the Princess proposed by the Prince, followed by several more, including one to me and one to Haydn, who was dining with us.'

Prince Ludwig von Starhemberg was guest of honour at the 1802 name-day celebrations of Princess Marie Hermenegild Esterházy held at Eisenstadt Palace following mid-morning Mass at the town's Bergkirche. An intimate of the Habsburgs, he became the Austrian ambassador in London from 1793 and so was well placed to report at first hand on Haydn's huge recent popularity in England. He may even have hinted to the previously rather grudging Prince Nicolaus that King George III and Queen Charlotte themselves had offered Haydn permanent quarters in Windsor Castle and had been rather miffed when 'the Shakespeare of Music' insisted instead on returning to Austria and his new prince!

This was Nicolaus II, not to be confused with his grandfather Nicolaus I – who was known, even in his lifetime, as 'the Magnificent'. Between 1761 and 1809 Haydn served four Esterházy princes. Appointed vice-Kapellmeister by Prince Paul Anton in May 1761 he must have been

initially shocked and worried when his new employer died unexpectedly in March the following year, aged only 50. Nicolaus I had never expected to succeed his brother, but when he did, this was unquestionably Haydn's most enormous stroke of good luck: for if Paul Anton was musically enthusiastic, Nicolaus was positively obsessive. He and Haydn (promoted full Kapellmeister on the death of ancient incumbent Gregor Werner in 1766) became as close as was conceivable at the time for master and servant, and worked together for nearly 30 years, mostly at the bespoke but remote fantasy palace of Eszterháza built by Nicolaus as his 'Hungarian Versailles'.

HAYDN'S FATE IS DECIDED

But the writing was always on the wall since it was well known that Nicolaus's eldest son, Anton, was entirely unmusical, so when the day of Nicolaus's death sadly came on September 28, 1790, Anton dissolved his father's lavish musical establishment at a stroke and closed Eszterháza immediately. He kept Haydn as nominal Kapellmeister on a pension but seemed to expect nothing from him. So London beckoned and, nearly in his 60th year, Europe's most celebrated composer embarked on an unprecedented adventure. We tend to think that Haydn was now free as a bird but Prince Anton did in fact reprimand him (gently) in July 1791 for his 'already extended absence' (he'd had to pay through the nose to put on an unexpected - and the last ever - operatic extravaganza at Eszterháza) and wasn't overjoyed to find his Kapellmeister intending to stay another year in England. In July 1792, however, Haydn did obey; he returned to Austria, joining his employer in Frankfurt am Main for the coronation of the Holy Roman Emperor (Franz II of Austria) and evidently making it up with him, as another London trip was granted in 1794. Anton then died unexpectedly (of an exploding pus sac in his ribcage) a few days after Haydn's second arrival in London – and so a new reign was announced, with another Nicolaus now at the helm.

This time Haydn was more or less given leave to stay in London until summer 1795, but despite all attempts to keep him there as 'another Handel' he was reportedly pleased that Nicolaus intended to reinstate some music at Eisenstadt and loyally returned. The new prince was not a very nice man and seemed not to realise just what an asset he had in Haydn. His only demand, in fact, was that his Kapellmeister should produce a new Mass setting every year for the name-day of his wife on September 8, the Feast of the Nativity of Mary (or in some cases the nearest Sunday). This lavishly uxorious gesture masked an unconcealed life of unbridled sexual excess - with myriad mistresses, countless illegitimates and even a private brothel in Vienna; so the annual festival was more guilt assuaged than a sign of genuine

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Eisenstadt Palace: where Starhemberg raised a toast to Haydn after the Harmoniemesse's premiere

devotion. But Haydn himself was devoted to the princess and she in turn relished his music, and this touching alliance helps to explain why her annual name-day Masses became such glorious demonstrations of the Kapellmeister's late-flowering genius as opposed to chores of duty. Another factor, of course, was that Haydn was a lifelong and notably devout Catholic, who'd cut his teeth as a chorister at St Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna from the age of eight, and had at least seven complete Masses to his credit between 1749 and 1782.

It is reassuring today to come across such an appreciatively immediate response to a late Haydn Mass as that of Prince Starhemberg. Historians over the years have tended instead to point to other contemporary reactions, which took Haydn to task for levity and being 'too cheerful' in these works while quoting the composer's characteristic retort that 'his

heart leapt for joy' at the thought of God. It transpires, however, that Prince Nicolaus II himself disliked Haydn's progressive music and much preferred the boring old church style of predecessor Werner, whereas his wife and her important ally the Empress Marie Therese in Vienna were effectively Haydn groupies. Also significant is Breitkopf & Härtel's immediate interest in publishing the Masses, thus ensuring their early celebrity throughout Catholic Europe just as the contemporaneous oratorios The Creation and The Seasons were spreading across the Protestant world as well. But any performing traditions that might have reflected Haydn's own direction at Eisenstadt's not-enormous Bergkirche unfortunately don't survive, though reports indicate that he took particular care in supervising these premieres. Recordings consequently reflect all kinds of stylistic attitudes, and some inevitably work better than others.

BEGINNING WITH BERNSTEIN

The late Charles Rosen famously failed to appreciate Haydn's Masses in his otherwise iconic The Classical Style in 1971, though he rather half-heartedly recognised the quality of the slow opening Kyrie of the Harmoniemesse. It would be intriguing to know what performances of these works he'd actually heard - and it's a pity that his friend Leonard Bernstein didn't give him a masterclass in their interpretation and understanding. Listening again to Bernstein's 1973 recording of this final, 'Wind-band' Mass is a strange experience to ears since accustomed to the nuances of period playing and singing. This is bigboned Haydn in every sense, and the New York Philharmonic players relish the music just as they had the 'Paris' and 'London' symphonies then mostly already recorded by them under Bernstein's galvanising direction. He clearly enjoys this music unreservedly and propels it forwards with insight and enthusiasm. The disc is notable, too, for a richly operatic contribution from a youthful Frederica von Stade. But the Westminster Choir trained by Joseph Flummerfelt now sound painfully stretched and they approach this carefully scaled liturgical music with the kind of democratic choral-society gusto they would also use - more appropriately - for The Creation and full-blooded oratorios in general. Still, it is all too easy to sniff with hindsight: the essential greatness of the music is not seriously compromised in this recording, which served to bring it alive when performances, let alone recordings, were pretty thin on the ground.

The first registered commercial 'recording' was presented under the auspices of HC Robbins Landon's Haydn Society in 1949 but was in fact a live performance from the 1947 Salzburg





BEST BRITISH MASS Hickox Chandos © CHANO612

Richard Hickox has a smiling magician's control over a humane account of this late masterpiece even if some moments are almost too relaxed. His soloists include the magnificent Mark Padmore and Stephen Varcoe as well as Hickox's wife Pamela Helen Stephen as a moving memento.





BEST AMERICAN MASS

Glover Naxos (\$\sigma\$ 8 572126

Jane Glover brings a welcome burst of energy and exuberance to polished performers well versed in this music. Here is a version fuelled by an awareness of the music's liturgical origins and that belies any sense of 'bargain' or budget status. Every Haydn-lover should own this joyful account.





BEST CONTINENTAL MASS

Kuijken DHM **⑤ ⑩** 88691 95308-2

Sigiswald Kuijken made some of the finest period accounts of Haydn's late symphonies with his delectable Petite Bande and this final Mass combines his hallmarks of clarity, balance and verve with a feeling for the devotion inherent in the score, plus a top-drawer cast of soloists.

Festival conducted by Joseph Messner; it has never been available on CD. With a bit of creative imagination, however, you could conclude that the first studio taping might actually sound rather similar in approach. Viennese forces gathered in 1964 under the direction of George Barati with Kurt Equiluz as tenor soloist. Everything is carefully calculated but stiflingly dull in its aspic-like approach that fails to relish the sheer originality of the score. Haydn is still being treated as but a step on the road to Beethoven, so all is scaled down and treated with kid gloves. Other Middle European performances by conductors as varied as János Ferencsik, Diethard Hellmann, Helmuth Rilling and Mariss Jansons are pretty similar in approach, and the last two were in fact the latest versions to join the catalogue as bicentenary tributes for 2009. More of them later, but suffice to say that Ferencsik in 1981 with Slovak forces is the best of its ilk.

BRITISH RECORDINGS

So it's back to Britain, where Haydn was welcomed so warmly in 1791. The record company that did more than any other for the composer's rehabilitation in the 1960s and '70s was Decca, with its pioneering complete sets of symphonies, quartets and sonatas. It actually started the journey in 1962 on its Argo label with the Nelson Mass by taking the LSO and a team of international soloists to King's College, Cambridge to join David Willcocks's celebrated choir. The result is stunning, almost literally so. No prissiness here, but no warmth either in a glassy recorded negotiation with the notoriously cavernous acoustic. 'King's College Chapel is famous for its carvings,' wrote Haydn in November 1791. 'It is all stone and so delicate that nothing more beautiful could have been made of wood.' He also went upriver: 'Each university [sic] has at the back of it a very roomy and beautiful garden, besides stone bridges, in order to afford passage over the stream which winds past.' Decca followed suit to complete the cycle with St John's College Choir and the Academy of St Martin in the Fields conducted by George Guest. They started with the Theresienmesse in 1965 and the Harmoniemesse followed in summer 1966.

There were several advantages to this new arrangement. The Academy and its director Neville Marriner had first worked with St John's and Guest in 1964 on a remarkable disc of Purcell verse anthems which still sounds freshly minted despite some inevitable anachronisms. In conversation today, Sir Neville recalls with affection these early collaborations as a genuine partnership



Joseph Haydn was 70 when he wrote the Mass

of equals and as sessions of sheer enjoyment: 'We weren't posh then and it all came together so naturally.' The Academy (unlike the LSO) work as a chamber ensemble and the St John's boys and men sing with open-throated vibrato-enriched tone which is warmly continental in contrast with the cooler Anglican sound of King's. So there is a quality of intimacy and warmth here which allows all the colour of Haydn's writing to emerge with vivid immediacy. In 1791 he wouldn't have seen Sir Gilbert Scott's great new Chapel of 1869 presiding over the Backs, but thanks to its high wooden roof, marble flooring and lofty stone tower the acoustic has ideal bloom and clarity which suits the scale of Haydn's writing to perfection. With Thurston Dart a vital

presence in Cambridge at the time, there would have been an awareness of stylistic perspective in a practical rather than a purely academic sense, and these performances seem to have found an instinctive and integrated balance between the vocal and instrumental forces and Brian Runnett's agile organ continuo.

The 'Harmonie' of the title is simply a reference to the fact that contemporary listeners noted that Haydn made conspicuous use in this last Mass of the fullest wind band yet at his disposal in these Eisenstadt years. It is crucial, therefore, that the instruments can be heard properly. The Academy's strings are transparent enough here to allow the wind and brass their heads without compromising choral richness, and engineer Kenneth Wilkinson captures it all within the natural ambience of the building. Despite technological advances, few subsequent recordings manage to outshine this one for sheer presence. The performance, too, sets a template that serves for most to follow even when using authentic instruments.

And first off the block in the UK in this respect was Hyperion at Winchester Cathedral with the Brandenburg Orchestra led by Roy Goodman. David Hill was a St John's organ student (1976-79), so it is natural to find him following in Guest's footsteps with vibrant choral singing and sprightly playing. This would be a top contender if it weren't for the obstacle of the cathedral itself. The clouds of reverberation are mostly well handled by engineer Antony Howell, but the result is somehow artificial in balance and the boys feel out of reach. At St John's you virtually see the whites of their eyes, but at Winchester their immediacy is masked.

For **Richard Hickox**, Chandos set the forces of Collegium Musicum 90 in

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

DATE	ARTISTS	RECORD COMPANY (REVIEW DATE)
1964	Vienna Acad Chbr Ch; Vienna St Op Orch / Barati	Tuxedo ® TUXCD1055
1966	Ch of St John's Coll, Cambridge; ASMF / Guest	Decca (9) (2) 455 020-2DF2 (12/66 ^R)
1973	Westminster Ch; New York PO / Bernstein	Sony (\$) (12/75°) 88697 48045-2 (12/75°)
1981	Slovak Philh Chor & Orch / Ferencsik	Hungaroton (F) HCD12360 (12/83)
1981	Mainz Bach Ch; SWR SO, Baden-Baden / Hellmann	Profil M PH11049
1991	Ch of Winchester Cath; Brandenburg Orch / Hill	Hyperion (B) CDH55208 (3/92 ^R)
1994	Namur Chbr Ch; Petite Bande / Kuijken	Deutsche Harmonia Mundi (\$) 10 88691 95308-2 (2/97 ^{R)}
1996	Collegium Musicum 90 / Hickox	Chandos (E) CHANO612 (2/98); (S) (8) CHANO7348
1997	Tolz Boys' Ch; Tafelmusik / Weil	Sony (§) (6) 88725 46394-2
1998	Arnold Schoenberg Ch; Concentus Musicus Wien / Harnon	court Warner ® 2564 69055-2 (2/00 ^R);
		© © 2564 69612-0; © © 2564 69939-8
2001	Monteverdi Ch; English Baroque Sols / Gardiner	Philips (F) (2) 470 297-2PH2 (7/02)
2008	Trinity Ch; Rebel Baroque Orch / Glover	Naxos (\$\ 8 572126; (\$\ 8) 8 508009
2008	Bavarian Rad Chor & SO / Jansons	BR-Klassik (F)
2008	Gächinger Kantorei Stuttgart; SWR Rad SO, Stuttgart / Rillir	Hänssler Classic (F) CD98 538 (6/09)

the Blackheath Concert Halls. The *Harmoniemesse* was the third of their complete cycle to be tackled, in November 1996. No boys here – but having female sopranos is hardly inauthentic in this instance. Details about the precise composition of the Esterházy Kapelle at Eisenstadt after 1795 are difficult to pinpoint, but it seems likely that Haydn mostly had a few women 'on top' given that a dedicated *Knabenchor* was only established by his immediate successor Johann Fuchs in 1804, by which time Haydn was unable to travel from Vienna to Eisenstadt so never heard them.

Hickox has a warm and genial approach to the music which is immediately winning. It is instructive to compare his version directly with that of **Sir John Eliot Gardiner** and his Monteverdi forces captured in Watford Colosseum by Philips in 2001. The choir and orchestra quite possibly have some members in common with Hickox's forces, and the soloists, too, are much of a muchness. This reading has sterling qualities only compromised by the dry and rather claustrophobic recording which sounds oddly vacuum-packed and anonymous.

The one movement of this last hurrah by Haydn which must have enraged Prince Nicolaus just as it enchanted Princess Marie is the *Benedictus* – a spine-tingling, hushed march marked *Molto allegro*. This has to have a glint in the eye because in the scheme of things it is quite naughty. Gardiner is rather headmasterly here and pushes on too insistently as the music gathers steam. Hickox remains fleet of foot and you feel instinctively that he would have been perfectly capable of cutting off the boy-in-front's pigtail, whereas Gardiner would have told him off.

CONTINENTAL OFFERINGS

In 1994, at the Begijhofkerk, Ghent, Sigiswald Kuijken teamed his Petite Bande with the Namur Chamber Choir plus a top-notch quartet of soloists including Sandrine Piau, Monica Groop and Christoph Prégardien. Clean and controlled, this is another winner, with beautifully blended sound and judicious natural tempos. My hopes were high for Bruno Weil's live account with the Tölzer Knabenchor and Tafelmusik from Kloster Irsee in 1997, but it skates superficially over the surface and the boys are often unfocused in tone and intonation. Nikolaus Harnoncourt, with Concentus Musicus Wien and the Arnold Schoenberg Choir, was recorded live at the Pfarrkirche, Stainz in 1998, and his approach, by contrast, is too stentorian and



Eisenstadt's Bergkirche (18th-century engraving)

faux-symphonic, with everything presented as if in inverted commas. A lot of confused nonsense has been written about the last six Masses as post-London 'symphonies-in-disguise', but this is largely misplaced conjecture compensating for Haydn's refusal to compose any more symphonies in Vienna after 1795 (and requests were plentifully received). The true ancestor of these nonetheless miraculous works is the grossly underestimated *Missa Cellensis* of 1782 and what Haydn achieves both here and later is a brilliant synthesis of idioms – symphonic, yes in part, but also inherently liturgical and even operatic in character.

All these elements nearly come together perfectly in a splendid recording made at New York's Trinity Church in September 2008 by Trinity Choir and the Rebel Baroque Orchestra. This forms part of a complete cycle issued by Naxos and mostly directed by J Owen Burdick. When he left his post in January that year the final three Masses were still to do and it was an inspired idea to invite Jane Glover to complete the set. Her account is simply infectious and the overwhelming sense of this performance is one of physical joy and spiritual fulfilment. She never sets a foot wrong and guides her American forces with inevitability and poise. This would be my top choice if only the solo singers had more of the personality and flavour so evident at St John's with, among others, the great Helen Watts. As a budget bargain, however, this is unbeatable and brings the music to its zenith unquenchably. Designed for release in 2009 to mark the bicentenary of Haydn's death, it effortlessly outshines a reliable but rather plodding account from Stuttgart by Helmuth Rilling and a horribly 'staged' live version in the Basilika at

Waldsassen by Bavarian Radio forces under **Mariss Jansons** which heaves along dutifully but without inspiration.

As he acknowledged the toast proposed to him by Prince Starhemberg at the Eisenstadt banquet in September 1802, Haydn may possibly have reflected that he'd come a long way from the servants' benches in 1761 to a place of honour with his employers and their guests at the top table. He was 70 and tired. Back in Vienna his health suddenly failed and he never completed another work despite struggling manfully with a last string quartet. By 1805 he started a catalogue of his output and was overjoyed to rediscover the Missa brevis of 1749, his first acknowledged score. Despite being 'old and weak' he supervised the addition of wind, brass and timpani parts to this freshly melodic work – a poignant return full circle to the genre which bookended his career, having already appended his final 'Laus Deo' to the closing page of the Harmoniemesse three years earlier. In defiance of his critics he told his last helper and biographer Georg Griesinger that he was in fact very proud of his church music – and for a proverbially modest man he was spot on.

The *Harmoniemesse* has an airborne buoyancy to its fugal writing which totally defies Haydn's three-score-years-and-ten but a profundity, too, only granted the very greatest of composers. If five or six of the recordings here convey this totality most beautifully I hope I may be forgiven, as a Johnian, in going back to 1966 for my favourite of all, finding Marriner and Guest in perfect accord with Haydn's joyful swansong. **G**





TOP CHOICE

Guest Decca (\$) (2) 455 020-2DF2

Although recorded way back in 1966, this historic performance immediately set the standard for others both in sound and style and though it may possibly have been equalled since it has never been surpassed. It still glows with warmth and genuine religious fervour just as Haydn would surely have wished.



Visit the Gramophone Player at gramophone.co.uk to hear excerpts from this month's featured recordings

HIGH FIDELITY

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THIS MONTH the remarkable Focal Easya speaker system, Bang & Olufsen's H6 headphones, and I wonder whether hi-res audio is too big a leap for most

Andrew Everard, Audio Editor

MONTH TEST DISCS



Guillermo Brachetta's Ciaccona set on Resonus is a stern test of any system's speed, resolution and agility



A superb sense of warmth and live presence distinguishes this LSO Live recording of Brahms's Second Symphony with Valery Gergiev

New ideas for desktop audio

Yet more evidence that the ways we listen keep expanding











ur main review this month – of Focal's Easya wireless speaker system – is fine evidence of the way the hi-fi industry is expanding its offering to cater for ever more ways of listening to music. Combining speakers needing only a mains cable connected wirelessly to a hub providing both physical and wire-free connections, it does an excellent job of combining convenience with superb sound, and is more than capable of filling even a large room.

Designed for more intimate listening are the new TD-M1 speakers from Eclipse, a company built around its beautiful eggshaped speakers, which use a single driver for a more coherent sound, and 'ground' that driver mechanically using a metal 'anchor' with the enclosure floating free. The new speakers, selling for £999 per pair, take that established formula and add built-in amplification and Bluetooth wireless connectivity, allowing the speakers to be used on a desktop or shelf and take their music directly from a suitable computer or portable device. There's also a USB input providing for a direct connection to a computer, and handling content at up to 24-bit/192khz. It's a neat and stylish solution, and while the speakers are maybe a little limited in their frequency range for large-room use, for personal listening they should be ideal given the precise, detailed sound for which Eclipse speakers are known. Also aimed at the desktop market is the new Quad 9AS, selling for around £600 a pair. Each speaker uses a 25mm fabric dome tweeter and a 10cm mid/bass unit, and houses a 35W amp for the tweeter and 65W for the woofer, and the system has a choice of RCA phono or 3.5mm stereo line-ins, plus optical, coaxial and asynchronous USB digital inputs. They use Class AB amplification rather than the Class D common in such designs, have a three-position bass equalisation switch for free-standing, shelf or close-to-wall use.

Back to wireless, loudspeaker company Monitor Audio has launched its first amplifier, designed to form the link between computers and handheld devices and its range of speakers. The A100 is set to sell for £400, and offers AirPlay connectivity to computers running iTunes and iOS smartphones and tablets, as well as Airstream direct connection to those iOS handhelds without having to go through a network. Connection to a home Wi-Fi set-up is simple, and the A100 can be used with third-party apps to stream music from DLNA servers. It also has digital and analogue inputs, and its curvaceous enclosure can be used horizontally or vertically, with a stand provided for the latter orientation.

Designed to link computers to existing hi-fi systems is the new **Denon** digital-to-analogue converter, the latest sign of the

larger hi-fi brands moving into this market sector. The £400 DA-300USB is, like the Monitor Audio amp, designed to be used horizontally or – with the stand supplied – vertically, and uses Denon's Advanced AL32 Processing upconversion and upsampling ahead of a 32-bit/192kHz digital to analogue section. There are coaxial, optical and noise-isolated USB-B inputs, and the DAC can handle content at up to 24-bit/192kHz as well as DSD2.8 and 5.6.

Finally, a novel speaker idea from **Focal**: its Dimension soundbar can be used with TV sets to give a virtual surround effect using five channels of amplification and speakers, all crammed into a unit just 6.5cm deep – so small enough to be used in front of a TV. Alternatively, you can add the matching Dimension Sub, which not only fills in the bass requirements but also provides a platform on which the TV can stand. The Dimension speaker will be £800, and the Sub £200.

- 1 The TD-M1 wireless speakers from **Eclipse** sell for £999/pr
- **Quad**'s 9AS desktop speakers feature Class AB amplification and cost £600/pr
- **3 Monitor Audio**'s A100 amplifier can be used horizontally or vertically, for £400
- 4 The £400 DA-300USB digital-to-analogue converter from **Denon**
- **5 Focal**'s Dimension soundbar gives a virtual surround sound effect for £800

REVIEW PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

Focal Easya

All-in-one speaker system makes wireless music foolproof



he audio landscape is changing.
While the traditional hi-fi system
of source, amplifier and speakers is
far from down and out, there's an
ever-increasing number of ways to listen
to music, from iPads in speaker docks,
through computers playing through digitalto-analogue converters into existing audio
set-ups, and all the way up to high-end
streaming systems.

With that broad range of choices now available, there is something out there for just about any need, from desktop audio to full-blown systems suitable for a dedicated music room. And of the many variations on the themes out there, French speaker company Focal's Easya is one of the most intriguing, combining 'full-size' hi-fi with all the modern convenience you could want.

What is Easya? Well, the company says we're now moving into the 'post docking era for music lovers', and so what it's come

up with is a pair of substantial floorstanding loudspeakers, complete with built-in amplification, plus a 'Hub' to which various source components can be connected. You can buy it with the speakers in either white or black high-gloss finishes, and the whole package will cost you £1850.

'What the Focal designers wanted to achieve was a complete high-quality hi-fi system, without wires'

However, that's just scratching the surface: what the Focal designers wanted to achieve was a complete high-quality hi-fi system, without wires. What's more, it had to be a system designed to appeal as much to existing buyers wanting a chic alternative to conventional hi-fi set-ups as it does to the archetypal modern buyer, clutching

a smartphone or tablet computer full of music and looking for something rather better than a budget speaker dock.

The 'without wires' demand – the only cable to each speaker being for mains power – dictated the technology Focal chose for Easya: it needed a way to have separate signals for left and right channels sent to the appropriate speakers, rather than going down the more usual 'slave-and-master' approach, with all the electronics in one speaker and a cable connecting that to the second enclosure.

That ruled out using Apple AirPlay, which doesn't lend itself to separate left and right transmission channels, and meant Easya is built around the uncompressed Kleer technology between Hub and speakers, with Bluetooth aptX – the best-sounding variant of that wireless technology – to connect portable devices and computers wirelessly to the Hub.

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SUGGESTED PARTNERS

The Focal Easya is very simple to use and set up. Here are two more ways of making the most of it...

APPLE IMAC

The Easya can connect to computers using USB, Bluetooth or SPDIF digital: an all-in-one desktop computer such as an Apple iMac would make an ideal companion for playing music and video



SAMSUNG GALAXY SMARTPHONE

The choice of Bluetooth rather than AirPlay means the Easya can be used wirelessly with a wide range of portable devices – not just iPads and iPhones but Android devices such as this Samsung Galaxy smartphone



The aptX system also has the benefit of being back-compatible with non-aptX Bluetooth hardware, meaning a wide range of devices can be used with it, including almost all modern computers, smartphones and tablet devices. If the device connected is aptX-capable, you get the improved sound quality; if not, it'll still work, and give reasonable sound.

The compact speakers stand just over 90cm tall, and are of a 2.5-way design using two 13cm Focal Polyglass drivers – one for midrange, the other for bass – whose surface is covered with minute glass spheres for stiffness, and one of the company's 25mm aluminium/magnesium inverteddome tweeters with Poron suspension, for extension and smoothness. Each cabinet uses a high-rigidity construction, and contains crossover, 85W of BASH digital amplification and wireless receiver.

The Hub, meanwhile, can be positioned up to 10m from the speakers, and adds to that aptX capability with a range of conventional inputs: there are optical and coaxial digital inputs, along with a miniUSB for connection to a computer, and analogue inputs on both RCA phonos and a 3.5mm stereo socket. A remote control allows volume and source selection, and also some playback control of connected USB and Bluetooth devices. Music can be fed into the Hub at up to 24-bit/96kHz via the digital inputs, but is down-converted to 16-bit/44.kHz for transmission to the speakers.

PERFORMANCE

The Easya system is simple to set up: Focal suggests a traditional 'equilateral triangle' layout, with the listener and the speakers at the three points, and with some toe-in toward the listening position. Spikes are provided for the speakers, with rubber feet and protective caps for solid floors, the grilles are removable, and the tweeters feature a 'self-healing' design to shrug off minor damage.

The speakers and hub arrive from the factory pre-paired, but should you have to repeat the process this is a simple matter of pushing buttons on both until lights change from a rapid flash to a slow pulse.

And that really is that. Setting up and using the Easya system is a liberating

experience, given the lack of cabling and conventional hi-fi 'boxes' required. I ended up with the hub on an end-table beside the sofa, simply for ease of connection of the computer via USB, and was immediately playing everything from music stored on my NAS devices – via the MacBook Air – to BBC radio using the iPlayer radio app and a wider range of Internet streams using the excellent Radium app.

And as well as being a delight to set up, the Easya system is a pleasure to use, too: it has a very similar presentation to the current mainstream Focal speaker models, being fast and explicit with excellent control and definition in the bass, a well-judged midband and a treble that's both sweet and clean. With such easy access to a wide range of music it's no surprise that I played a lot of it through the Easya speakers, and nothing disappointed, from BBC Radio 3's internet stream all the way through to 24-bit/96kHz downloads downsampled by the system to CD quality, but still entirely involving.

The weight and power of Brahms's Second Symphony in a live LSO recording is delivered with very persuasive atmosphere and a lovely sense of space around the music, while a more intimate recording such as Guillermo Brachetta's Ciaccona disc of harpsichord music sees the Focal system sinking its teeth into a strikingly percussive rendition to deliver both detail and the exuberance of the pieces.

The overall balance of this system is near-perfectly judged: it's not so analytical that low-bitrate content has its shortcomings revealed, but then neither does it play things so safe that higher-quality recordings have their resolution and nuances downplayed. The amplifiers are – as you would hope – well-matched to the drive-units, allowing the system to go loud enough for almost all needs without ever coarsening up or sounding like it's reaching its limits.

Add to that the style of the whole system, the ease of set-up and use, and the flexibility of the hub when it comes to connecting source components, and this is truly a very modern audio solution, beautifully executed for those buyers wanting a serious hi-fi set-up, but without all those boxes and wires. **6**

DESIGN NOTES

Raphaël Triomphe

Home Audio Product Manager, Focal

On hearing Pink Floyd live and the new digital age



Raphaël Triomphe has been with Focal for almost 10 years, after studying electrical, electronic and electroacoustic engineering at the University of Wales in the late 1990s.

But his musical influences go back to his childhood, when he lived just 100m down the hill from the Roman amphitheatre in Orange, in the South of France. 'Every summer, during the annual Les Chorégies d'Orange festival, I used to go up there during the day to hear the rehearsals, as well as to the "générale" during the two days before the concerts, when local people could attend for free.

'With my mother I went to see many fantastic operas, which gave me a great opportunity to discover classical music in a fantastic place.'

'More than ever a brand like Focal has to extol highquality audio'

He counts another performance as his most memorable musical experience: 'I attended a Pink Floyd concert in 1994 – a fantastic night of music, when I was amazed for more than three hours by the spectacle around the music. The entire audience was silently hoping the moment would never end!'

A wide range of music is used in voicing Focal's speakers, in the amazing state of the art listening room in the factory. 'We use classical music, but also jazz, rock and even electronic music, but we do have dedicated well-known tracks in order to have a reference to compare.'

He says that 'more than ever a brand like Focal has to extol high-quality audio. Today's technology no longer places limits on the storage of high quality files, and thus digital music has entered a new phase; now it's perfectly possible to access high definition music of at least CD quality.

'So our goal is to carry on our initial brand value of high-quality audio and to be capable of delivering emotions and passion for music lovers.'

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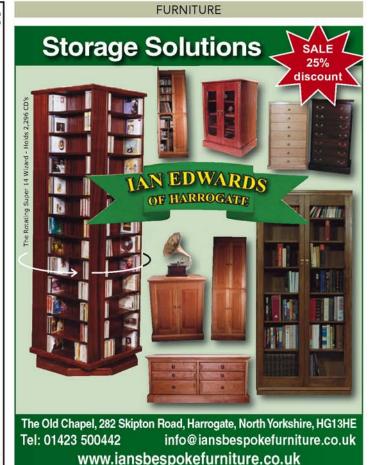
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REVIEW BEOPLAY H6

Headphones to turn heads

Unashamedly luxurious headphones with a sound to match the style

here's more to the design of a Bang & Olufsen product than simply how well it plays music or TV programmes: as well as building most of its range from raw materials - most other companies buy in or sub-contract the building-blocks - the Danish manufacturer pays extraordinary attention to the way users interact with audio and video equipment.

That's very much in evidence in the £329 H6 headphones, part of the company's BeoPlay sub-brand. The result of a cooperation between Danish designer Jakob Wagner and B&O's electronics and acoustics engineers, the new model is built on a skeleton of the company's familiar in-house-anodised aluminium, and finished with New Zealand leather. Available in either black or natural tan, the headphones are of a closed-back design, and use a 40mm custom-designed driver with radial ribbing and a neodymium magnet, tuned with a

The 1.2m cable can be plugged into either the left or right earpiece - and indeed headphones can be daisy-chained for listening à deux (or even à trois) - and a nifty multifunction remote control/volume adjustment is provided, capable of handling major functions of iOS devices. An optional cable with simpler controls is available for use with other devices.

PERFORMANCE

The BeoPlay H6 headphones look and feel chunky, yet weigh just 230g, making them comfortable for extended use, indoors or out. True, they're no featherweights, but they strike a good balance between

substance and practicality: there's sufficient adjustment to make them fit snugly without undue pressure, and the leather pads sit well on the ears, forming a good seal without becoming hot over long listening sessions.

Listen to the H6, and a couple of things become apparent: one is that the headphones sound very good indeed when used with portable players - I used an iPhone and an iPad mini, as well as the Fiio X3 - with excellent clarity and weight, welldefined bass and a sense of openness and space unusual in closed-back headphones. The sound is rich, attractive and ever-soeasy to enjoy.

However, the other immediately obvious point is that the sound is capable of massive improvement when the headphones are driven by slightly meatier amplification: I tried various headphone amps, including the little AudioQuest DragonFly, Fiio's Mont Blanc E12 and the high-end Meridian Prime amp.

Fed from a high-quality amplifier, the H6 shakes off any vestige of 'playing it safe' it may have on the end of an iPhone, and really opens up into a sound that's as refined as it is dramatic. B&O may be pitching its Play line at a younger market, but by no means are these headphones designed only for those wanting a pounding bass-line and an exciting overall balance: as already mentioned the bass extension is impressive, but it's matched with low-end definition and control that's just as striking, while a smooth midband and airy, but sweet, treble complete the sonic picture.

The H6 headphones are as at home playing the B&W Society of Sound download of Brahms's First Symphony **SPECIFICATION** BANG & **OLUFSEN BEOPLAY H6**

Type Over-ear headphones Price £329

Drive units 4cm radial-ribbed, bass-reflex

Frequency range 20Hz-22kHz **Enclosures** Aluminium, closed-back, with memory foam/lambskin earpads and leather/fabric/aluminium headband

Cable 1.2m, detachable, with iOS controls

Colours Black or natural leather **Dimensions** 19.7x19.4mmx4cm

Weight 230g beoplay.com

(LSO/Gergiev) as it is with the atmospheric IsoMike recordings of pianist Robert Silverman playing Mozart piano sonatas, while the superb-sounding Ciaccona set by harpsichordist Guillermo Brachetta (on Resonus) shows just how much attack and definition they can deliver. Fast, driving and almost breathtakingly exciting, the Brachetta set is a remarkable high-definition recording, and the B&O headphones are more than up to the job.

As I may have made clear in the past, I haven't been the greatest fan of headphone listening, much preferring a pair of small speakers on the desk. But with the arrival of fine headphones such as the BeoPlay H6, I'm having to do some rethinking. 6

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ESSAY

'I'm all for high-resolution audio, but there's a bigger issue...'

While audiophiles tussle about how 'beyond-CD' audio should be delivered, wouldn't it be a start to have CD-quality downloads more widely available?



Sony has an ever-growing range of systems able to play high-resolution music - but maybe we need to sort widespread availability of CD-quality downloads first before the mass-market is ready for even better quality

ne phrase stuck in my mind from the reports of the supposed High Resolution Audio focus event held at the International CES at the beginning of the year. Amidst all the ever-growing control-freakery of the organising Consumer Electronics Association of America – 'HRA' is apparently the new way we must describe 'beyond-CD' audio, and the show must be called 'International CES' with no mention of the words consumer, electronics or show – someone was actually talking sense about the future promotion of high-quality audio in the home.

The promised focus on 'HRA' at the Las Vegas show wasn't quite what some had hoped: far from being in the thick of the action on the floor of the massive exhibition halls, the HRA section was parked away in a ballroom of the hotel hosting the high-end audio part of the event – the part the majority of showgoers, enthused by ever-larger TVs, robotics and 'wearable tech' never visits, or even notices.

Even in the ballroom, I'm told it looked like the battle lines had been drawn up: on one side of the room, the proponents

of ever-higher resolution based on PCM technology; on the other, those promoting DSD – the enabling technology behind SA-CD – as the way forward.

Oh goody, a format war – perfect to confuse consumers, and good only for those of us who make a living commenting on audio technology. Well, it gives us something to write about...

Amidst all this confusion, one voice of common sense shone through in a panel session threatening to get bogged down in discussions of multiple audio formats and delivery methods. Steve Silberman, in charge of development at AudioQuest (the maker of audio cables and devices such as the DragonFly USB DAC/headphone amplifier), said that the current efforts to promote high-resolution audio were like attempting to fly to the Moon without first inventing the aeroplane: 'there are all these steps inbetween.'

He definitely has a point: yes, the cost of storage has fallen, and high-speed broadband is becoming more widespread and affordable, but for many people in many parts of the world, downloading the often huge files 'hi-res' music requires is a major problem, and will remain so for a good while. Some of us may be lucky enough to be running 100MB broadband, but you get a reality bump when a reader says, 'Where I live, the best I can get is 250kBps': a high-resolution album is going to take a long time to acquire at that speed!

The other question is whether the mass-market, which after all will drive the growth of better-quality audio, actually wants anything beyond the MP3s and free music sources currently available. As the man from AudioQuest also noted, hi-fi enthusiasts represent just a tiny part of the market: beyond this very small group, 'Over a billion people every month go to YouTube, and out of that, 330 million watch music and concerts. There are over 600 million active iTunes accounts. In order to sell them high-resolution audio, we have to go where they live.' In other words, in order to move the market on, those are the users with which both hardware companies and the music industry need to engage.

I'd go further, and say that, while 'hi-res' music may be attractive to those of us with top-notch audio systems and the internet access required to download it, if we're ever going to move beyond data-reduced MP3 files, there's a vital first step to be taken. And that's both demonstrating to mass-market consumers that there's an advantage in downloading music at a minimum of CD quality, and then making files of this standard as readily available as the compressed stuff is right now. As classical music enthusiasts we're relatively well-served in this respect, both by enterprising

'If better-quality music is to become widely available, then the catalogue needs to expand on a massive scale'

labels and by the specialist online music retailers; however, if better-quality music is to become widely available, then the catalogue needs to expand on a massive scale, to embrace a much greater diversity of musical styles and also attract the mass music market with every new release.

That, almost inevitably will lead to something the music and audio industries may well resent, but is likely to be forced to embrace. The big tipping-point will come when the major online music retailers move into CD-quality downloads: and that means Amazon and iTunes really hold the future of both recorded music and home audio in their hands. **6**

gramophone.co.uk GRAMOPHONE APRIL 2014 141

PERFORMANCES & EVENTS

Westbroek and Rattle's Berlin Puccini • Italian tour of Bach with Hewitt • Gabetta and Ashkenazy collaboration continues in China • Runnicles's Mahler Ninth in Scotland



Sir Simon Rattle and the Berliner Philharmoniker perform Puccini for the first time together

EVENT OF THE MONTH

BERLIN

Manon Lescaut in a concert performance starring Eva-Maria Westbroek (Apr 26)

Eva-Maria Westbroek joins the Berlin Philharmonic and Sir Simon Rattle for a concert performance in the Philharmonie of Puccini's opera, streamed live to online audiences internationally through the Digital Concert Hall. The concert follows performances of the work at the Easter Festival in Baden-Baden several days beforehand featuring the same cast. Dutch soprano Westbroek, who has appeared as Sieglinde in Wagner's Die Walküre with the Berlin Philharmonic in several productions, stars in the title-role alongside Naples-born bel canto tenor Massimo Giordano as Des Grieux. The cast also features Lester Lynch, Bogdan Mihai, Krešimir Špicer, Magdalena Kožená and the Vienna Philharmonia Choir under chorus master Walter Zeh.

berliner-philharmoniker.de

AMSTERDAM

Mozart from Zimmermann and the Royal Concertgebouw (Mar 28; Apr 1, 3, 23-26)

Violinist Frank Peter Zimmermann joins the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and chief conductor Mariss Jansons for seven performances: in Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Paris's Salle Pleyel, London's Barbican, Vienna's Musikverein and Alte Oper in Frankfurt. On the programme is Bruckner's Symphony No 7 and, in two performances in Amsterdam, Rossini's The Silken Ladder Overture and Beethoven's Emperor Piano Concerto featuring soloist Krystian Zimerman. In all programmes, Zimmermann lends his lyrical and emotionally dedicated interpretation to Mozart's Third Violin Concerto, a work he committed to disc in both 1995 and 1996 with the Berlin Philharmonic under Wolfgang Sawallisch and the Württemberg Chamber Orchestra under Jörg Faerber respectively, both for EMI. concertgebouworkest.nl

COMO

Angela Hewitt performs Bach concertos with Camerata Salzburg (Mar 29 - Apr 2)

Pianist and 2006 *Gramophone* Artist of the Year Angela Hewitt has a long association

with the works of Bach, having recorded The Well-Tempered Klavier in both 1998 and 2008 (the latter accompanied by a tour of 58 cities in 21 countries) and the composer's complete concertos featuring solo keyboard in 2005 – all for Hyperion. As March comes to an end, Hewitt returns to the Bach concertos in five performances with Camerata Salzburg in venues throughout Italy, including Teatro Sociale in Como, Teatro della Pergola in Florence, Teatro Fraschini in Pavia and Teatro Comunale in Treviso. On the programme are Brandenburg Concertos Nos 4 and 5, the Triple Concerto for piano, flute and violin, BWV1044, and keyboard concertos in D minor (BWV1052) and D major (BWV1054). angelahewitt.com

PARIS

Violinist Akiko Suwanai and pianist Itamar Golan perform at the Louvre (Apr 2)

Lithuanian pianist Itamar Golan and Japanese violinist Akiko Suwanai team up once again following the 2012 release of their recital album, 'Emotion', featuring Bartók, De Falla and Kreisler (on Universal). The two take to the stage of the Louvre Auditorium to perform a recital including Beethoven's Seventh

Violin Sonata, Bartók's First Violin Sonata, a selection of Shostakovich's 24 Preludes, Op 34, and a new work by Eric Tanguy. International audiences can experience the intimate performance, too, via a live online broadcast through medici.tv – now in its fifth year of a streaming partnership with the Louvre. louvre.fr

VIENNA

Villazón sings Mozart concert arias with Basle Chamber Orchestra (Apr 3)

Mexican tenor Rolando Villazón recently teamed up with the LSO and conductor Sir Antonio Pappano to add an album of oft-neglected Mozart concert arias to his output for Deutsche Grammophon. It was praised in Gramophone's February 2014 issue by Richard Wigmore for its 'ardour' and 'dramatic energy'. Villazón now brings those arias to the concert hall, performing for the fourth time in Vienna's Great Voices series at the Konzerthaus. on this occasion with the conductorless Basle Chamber Orchestra. He is an artist 'incapable of being bland and emotionally disengaged', and his 'sensitive' and 'impassioned' aria interpretations are sure to set Viennese pulses racing.

konzerthaus.at

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BOSTON

Bernard Rands premiere played by US pianist Jonathan Biss (Apr 3, 4, 5 & 8)

The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra music director Robert Spano leads the Boston Symphony Orchestra in its final world premiere of the 2013-14 season -Bernard Rands's Piano Concerto. A BSO commission, the work was composed for American pianist Jonathan Biss, who joins the orchestra in four performances on the Symphony Hall stage. Also on the programme are Debussy's Nuages and Fêtes from the composer's orchestral Nocturnes, and Rachmaninov's colourful final work, Symphonic Dances, composed in 1940 for the Philadelphia Orchestra. The concert will be broadcast live by WCRB 99.5 Classical New England throughout the Greater Boston area on Saturday April 5, and streamed online worldwide. A further Encore performance can be heard on Monday April 14. bso.org

HONG KONG

Ashkenazy and Sol Gabetta team up with the Hong Kong Philharmonic (Apr 4 & 5)

The Argentinian cellist Sol Gabetta returns to the stage with conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy, following their collaboration in Shostakovich's Second Cello Concerto with the Philharmonia Orchestra last year. On this occasion, Gabetta performs Elgar's much-loved Cello Concerto accompanied by the Hong Kong Philharmonic in the orchestra's Cultural Centre Concert Hall. Ashkenazy also conducts Elgar's overture In the South (Alassio) and concludes the programme with Mussorgsky's Pictures at an Exhibition in his own distinctive orchestral arrangement - a version he committed to disc with the Philharmonia Orchestra alongside the original piano version back in 1982 for Decca.

hkphil.org

LONDON

Boris Giltburg plays Russian Romantics in an LSO St Luke's piano recital (Apr 10)

Russian pianist and 2013 Queen Elisabeth Competition first prize winner Boris Giltburg performs Romantic piano works from his homeland in a recital at Jerwood Hall, LSO St Luke's, broadcast throughout the UK as a BBC Radio 3 Lunchtime Concert. On the programme are Scriabin's Piano Sonata No 3, Rachmaninov's Moments musicaux Nos 1, 2 and 4 and Prokofiev's Piano Sonata No 7, the last released by Giltburg on Orchid



Sol Gabetta plays the Elgar Concerto in Hong Kong

Classics alongside the other two 'War' Sonatas, Nos 6 and 8, in autumn 2012. That album earned a *Gramophone* Editor's Choice accolade in the Awards 2012 issue: 'These performances of Prokofiev's three "War" Sonatas... eclipse all others on record – even those tirelessly and justifiably celebrated performances by Richter and Gilels,' wrote Bryce Morrison.

lso.co.uk

CLEVELAND

Yuja Wang performs Rachmaninov's Third Concerto under Guerrero (Apr 10-12)

Yuja Wang brings her polished pianism to the Cleveland stage, performing Rachmaninov's Third Piano Concerto with the Cleveland Orchestra under conductor Giancarlo Guerrero alongside Prokofiev's Classical Symphony and Rimsky-Korsakov's Sheherazade at Severance Hall over three consecutive days. Each performance is preceded by an hour-long free Concert Preview in Reinberger Chamber Hall. Wang recently released a live recording of the Rachmaninov Concerto together with Prokofiev's Second Piano Concerto with the Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela, named an Editor's Choice in Gramophone's February 2014 issue. 'Making her virtuoso credentials clear throughout, Wang dismisses every difficulty with nonchalant ease,' wrote Bryce Morrison. 'When Rachmaninov claimed sardonically that he wrote his concerto for elephants and asked himself why he wrote something so difficult, he reckoned without Wang's astonishing facility.'

clevelandorchestra.com

NEW YORK

Levine conducts Mozart's Così fan tutte at the Met Opera (Apr 23, 26, 30; May 3, 8)

Metropolitan Opera music director James Levine conducts a cast of youthful stars in Mozart's Così fan tutte. Susanna Phillips and Isabel Leonard are the sisters Fiordiligi and Dorabella, Matthew Polenzani and Rodion Pogossov are their lovers, and Danielle de Niese is the scheming Despina. The five performances are a revival of the production that heralded Levine's triumphant return to the Met in September 2013 – his first performance on the New York company's stage following an absence of two years as a result of spinal damage. International audiences will be able to watch the performance on April 26 live in cinemas through the Met's Live in HD programme. Further cinema broadcasts take place in the US on April 30, and in Canada on June 21 and 23.

metoperafamily.org

GLASGOW

Runnicles conducts the BBC Scottish SO in Mahler's Ninth Symphony (Apr 24-26)

BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra chief conductor Donald Runnicles conducts the orchestra in Mahler's monumental Ninth Symphony alongside Arvo Pärt's Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten in three performances at Glasgow's City Halls (April 24), Aberdeen's Music Hall (April 25) and Edinburgh's Usher Hall (April 26). The concerts are preceded by Prelude talks free to ticket holders – by Dr Jeremy Barham, author of The Mahler Companion, who reflects on the composer and his influence. Audiences outside Scotland also have the opportunity to hear Runnicles's Mahler, as the performances are to be recorded by BBC Radio 3 for future broadcast.

bbc.co.uk/bbcsso

TORONTO

Canadian Opera Co presents Donizetti's Roberto Devereux (Apr 25 - May 21)

Corrado Rovaris conducts Donizetti's drama of Elizabethan intrigue, Roberto Devereux, for the Canadian Opera Company at the Four Seasons Centre in Toronto. The production is a revival from Dallas Opera starring Sondra Radvanovsky in her role debut as Elisabetta, Russell Braun as Nottingham, Giuseppe Filianoti as Devereux and Allyson McHardy as Sara. Toronto radio station New Classical 96.3 FM is the official sponsor of the performances and will broadcast the production throughout Toronto.

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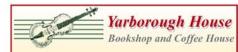
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Claudio Abbado

The only time I saw Claudio Abbado conduct was on November 21, 2012, in the Musikverein in Vienna. The Orchestra Mozart under his baton gave a programme of Schumann, Mendelssohn and Beethoven. I remember watching the maestro's arms and his hands, raised as if willing the music to lift him towards the skies. He was flying and taking us along. It was a fascinating experience.

Last year I had booked a ticket for his December 4 concert at the same venue, with Maurizio Pollini as soloist. Months before that, Abbado's concerts started getting cancelled. I wished I could believe it was just an acute illness that would pass. As it turned out, the concert, a fine event, was conducted by Bernard Haitink.

Claudio Abbado's death didn't come as a surprise and yet I was stunned for quite a while before sorrow flooded me, sorrow for a man I had never met but who had enriched my life as the lives of many others, with his total commitment to music, and his ability and willingness to share his almost transcendental experience with individuals and audiences all over the world. What a fallacy, in his case, is the saying that nobody is irreplaceable! The sense of loss, though it may become less intense with time, will nevertheless remain. Aino Bonačić Slivnik Ljubljana, Slovenia

A remarkable Strauss trio

Your marvellous, informative and timely highlighting of the incomparable Richard Strauss (February, page 10) prompted the following two responses.

I will most remember his proclaiming that 'music is how our feelings sound'. Profound, to say the least.

Second, the recollection that, at his funeral in 1949, the moment was (at least in part) honoured by the singing of the famous trio from the end of *Der Rosenkavalier*, with no less than Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Christa Ludwig and Teresa Stich-Randall. They were conducted by the young Georg Solti, who did a masterly job of keeping these ladies together and calm as each of them broke down in tears because of the strong emotions of

Letter of the Month

Imagined recordings

Having been a collector of classical recordings for more than 50 years, the advent of the CD has enriched and widened my listening experience immeasurably. It has been a joy to rediscover recordings which I never expected to hear again, and often a revelation to find performances by artists which I did not even know existed. Who would have thought that Klemperer's *Petrushka*, and Boulez's Brahms *German Requiem* and Schumann *Scenes from Goethe's Faust* would resurface on CD?

Harriet Smith's review of a range of DG Eloquence CDs by Wilhelm Kempff (March, page 67) has reminded me of an occasional wistful pastime of mine, which is to imagine recordings I wish some of my favourite performers had made, but never did. If only Kempff had recorded the complete Mozart piano sonatas, to complement his sets of Beethoven and Schubert! What I would give to hear Klemperer



Kempff: no Mozart sonata cycle

in the Elgar symphonies or any of those by Vaughan Williams, Walton and Sibelius. And today, if only Anne-Sophie Mutter would record the Elgar and Nielsen concertos, or that Boulez might take a liking to Tippett! Are there other readers who secretly harbour their own such personal wishlists? *Keith Pearce Penzance, Cornwall, UK*

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Please send letters responding to articles in this issue for consideration for publication in the May issue by March 31. *Gramophone* reserves the right to edit all letters for publication.

PRESTÖ

that historic moment of the passing of 85-year-old Strauss. *Leon J Hoffman*

Beecham's Ariadne

Chicago, US

Because its preserved recording was never widely circulated, commercially or privately, Sir Thomas Beecham's performance of *Ariadne auf Naxos* at the 1950 Edinburgh Festival was understandably mentioned nowhere in Hugo Shirley's discographic survey of Richard Strauss's masterpiece (February, page 96). However, the performance is worth recalling for many reasons, and its long-out-of-print pressings (Melodram CDs and Beecham Society LPs), being still available from online sources, definitely warrant a search.

Above all else, the performance gave its audience the rare chance of experiencing something similar to the original 1912 version of the work, with the 'Opera' preceded by a stretch of introductory dramatic dialogue rather than the musical 'Prologue' substituted in 1916. In the 'Opera', Zerbinetta's coloratura-laced aria was presented in its longer and more florid form. But what of the artists themselves? As if the inevitable podium magic achieved by one of Strauss's most ardent and persuasive champions were not enough, those in attendance were treated to renditions by many well-remembered singers of the time. These included Hilde Zadek (Ariadne), Ilse Hollweg (Zerbinetta), Peter Anders (Bacchus) and even Alexander Young, a Beecham favourite, in the relatively minor role

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of Scaramuccio. Sir Thomas left us far too few recordings of Strauss, the other complete operas represented solely by a live *Elektra* (issued in the same Beecham Society LP set) from the famous 1947 Strauss Festival in London. That less than ideal state of affairs makes this Edinburgh *Ariadne* all the more precious.

George A Locke Granite Bay, CA, US

Previn's specialisms

I read with interest the Specialist's Guide to conductors who compose (March, page 100) but found the exclusion of

André Previn quite surprising. While his conducting career started somewhat later in his career, his compositions include the operas A Streetcar Named Desire, Brief Encounter, violin and guitar concertos – the list goes on. Mr Previn should be congratulated for his wide-ranging output, and for making so many of us take notice of great classical music. John Williams, via email

Editorial note

In the February issue (page 81) we misspelt the name of the video director of Jake Heggie's *Moby-Dick*, Frank Zamacona.

OBITUARIES

The world's oldest Holocaust survivor and a flamenco guitarist



ALICE HERZ-SOMMER

Pianist Born November 26, 1903 Died February 23, 2014

At the time of her death, aged 110, the pianist Alice Herz-Sommer was the world's oldest Holocaust survivor.

A successful pianist before the war, she was deported to Theresienstadt in 1943. Though presented by the Nazis to the outside world as a model settlement, it was a concentration camp in which tens of thousands died, and from which 150,000 were transported to extermination camps. Yet within it, in keeping with the Nazis' use of the camp in propaganda, there was a cultural life of sorts, and Herz-Sommer was among the artists who performed in daily concerts. 'Even in the earth's darkest corner the music took away our fear and reminded us of the beauty in this world,' she recalled. After initially returning to Prague following the camp's liberation, she settled in Israel, teaching at the Rubin Academy of Music, before moving to London in the 1980s.

Herz-Sommer features in *Refuge in Music*, a documentary about Theresienstadt (reviewed on page 109). Talking to Daniel Hope, she conveys a moving lack of bitterness about her experiences. 'Only when we are so old are we aware of the beauty of life,' she tells him.



PACO DE LUCÍA

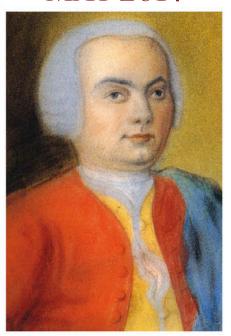
Guitarist Born December 21, 1947 Died February 26, 2014

'A cross between Miles Davis, Julian Bream and Picasso' was Gramophone's rather wonderful description of Paco de Lucía, the flamenco guitarist who has died aged 66. Flamenco, born amid the swirling cultural forms mixing in Andalusia over many centuries, gained an international popularity in the 20th century, and foremost among its figures was de Lucía. Performing publicly since the age of 12 and touring as a solo artist by 14, he released his first album aged 18. Possessing the tradition's instinctive and intense virtuoso blend of rhythm and romanticism, he then drew in influences from other genres to evolve and enhance the style further, creating, as Gramophone again put it, 'an almost new Spanish art form: guitar music which combines the compelling rhythms of the gypsy idiom with radical harmonisation and lavish melodic themes'.

In 1991 he recorded Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez*. The result completely and vividly embodies the work's spirit, with a deeply emotive *Adagio*; the composer was delighted with the result.

Obituaries by Martin Cullingford

NEXT MONTH MAY 2014



CPE Bach: the unsung hero

To celebrate the 300th anniversary of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Richard Wigmore explores the composer's output and reveals his hidden genius

Praise for the organ

Jeremy Nicholas celebrates a number of magnificent instruments, both historic and modern, and interviews the charismatic Cameron Carpenter about the organ he helped create

Vaughan Williams's Fourth Symphony

Andrew Achenbach explores the available recordings of the work dedicated to Arnold Bax and recommends the one to buy

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The historian of the 18th-century on the poignancy of Butterworth, and recreating Handel's Messiah at the Foundling Hospital

Because my family were chapel – my father's side Welsh Baptist, my mother's side Methodist – I was very used to Welsh music and church music, so hymns were the most dominant thing that I grew up with. But the other classical music I remember hearing a lot, on the radio, was Kathleen Ferrier. Because I grew up in Lancashire, as a girl from Rochdale, Ferrier's greatest hits were always thought to be appropriate listening.

I sang in choirs – I was a mezzo-soprano – when I was growing up, and one of my most beloved pieces of music was Bach's *Sheep may safely graze*. Bach is far and away my favourite composer. I am interested in the fact that the music comes out of a Protestant context, and it has a sense of discipline about it, and it's one of the few things that I can play when I'm working and writing. And I do think it lowers the blood pressure.

I really love English pastoral music, and I particularly like George Butterworth's *The Banks of Green Willow* – I enjoy reworkings of folk songs. Butterworth died on the Somme, and this piece is moving as a testament of a generation and its deep feeling for landscape. That Butterworth met his end in the first truly industrialised war in history is very poignant.

Particularly in the early 18th century, music cannot be separated from the social and cultural aesthetic. The interest in Classical harmony is of a piece with ideas of what architecture should look like. If you want your students to understand what a new regime is all about and what raw power is, you play a bit of *Zadok the Priest*. To give you another example, the female soprano really emerges in the 18th century, usually Italian. But while a lot of the arias are about them showing off their ability to embroider on a theme, in all the commentary on them it's never seen as a kind of genius, or as composing, it's always seen as a natural expression of their prettiness.

I'm very interested in the difference between the cultures of women and men. There were all sorts of instruments that women couldn't play in the 18th century – they weren't supposed to play anything that involved separating their knees. So really the most decorous was always the harpsichord, and then the harp became popularised. It was about showing off the prettiness of the hands, and was key in displays in the drawing room, which were supposed to be private but were an exercise in the marriage market nevertheless. I've been amazed at how many young men's diaries have some reference to playing the violin or the flute. It was about being able to be a part of 'the company' – it's that idea of domestic harmony: that wasn't a dead metaphor, you were supposed to be able to go and get involved and fit yourself in to the company.



UGHAN WILLIAMS NOON STAFFONY

THE RECORD I COULDN'T LIVE WITHOUT

Butterworth The Banks of Green Willow **London Symphony Orchestra / Richard Hickox**Chandos (F) CHAN9902 (7/01)
This year, with so much reinvestigation of World
War I, I hope that the cultural context will be restored

It's through song that we get access to some of the most widely based concerns of the culture, particularly among people who could easily be illiterate – and heartbreak is no less bitter for the inability to read. If you listen to something like *Early one morning*, that is a song of terrible heartbreak. The same is true of *O waly*, *waly* – 'I leaned my back up against some oak / Thinking that he was a trusty tree / But first he bended and then he broke / And so did my false love to me.' And that puts me in mind of all the women – many of whom had been left and abandoned by their lovers – who gave up their babies to the Foundling Hospital.

We've recreated for BBC 2 the performance at the Foundling Hospital Chapel of Handel's *Messiah* in 1750. It's about Thomas Coram's great campaign to establish the Foundling Hospital, which needed funding. Crassly put, you could say this was the first Live Aid. He turns the tide and makes charity fashionable. He's helped by Hogarth, Handel offers his mighty *Messiah*, and it becomes the talk of London. And it's really moving to me that these three childless men come together to create an institution to protect London's unwanted babies and to offer something to desperate women. **G** *Messiah at the Foundling Hospital' is broadcast on BBC 2 in April*





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RS-2i, GS1000i



PS1000, GS1000i



SR60i, SR125i, RS-2i





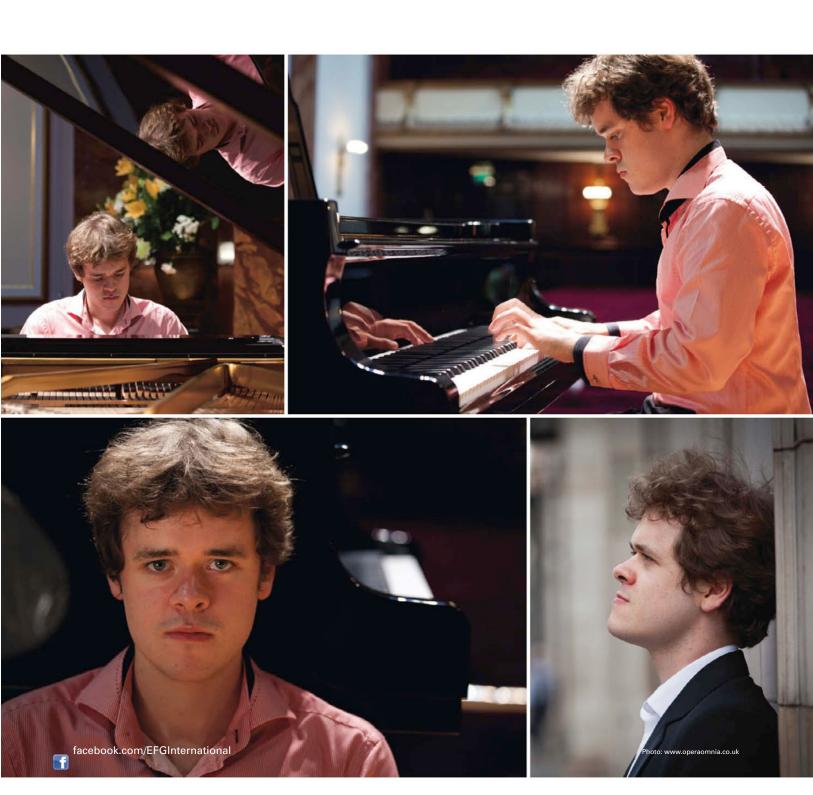








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